

# SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE

## STRATEGIC PLAN



# FIRST IN-LAST OUT

June 2004



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Five-Year Strategic Plan

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## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Five-Year Strategic Plan

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Date: June 1, 2004  
To: City Manager/City Council  
From: Jeff Bowman, Fire Chief  
Subject: San Diego Fire-Rescue Five-Year Strategic Plan

As your Fire Chief, I am extremely proud to present the San Diego Fire-Rescue (SDFD) Five-Year Strategic Plan. This plan represents the first Strategic Plan ever developed by the SDFD and will help guide our organization into the future.

The onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen revolutionary changes in business, technology and society. As the pace of this change continues to accelerate, our department will face challenges radically different from those which were encountered in the past. However, many opportunities will exist if we can position ourselves to take advantage of them. I believe that strong leadership, clear vision and core values will become increasingly more important to the accomplishment of our goals. It is my firm belief that this Strategic Plan will provide the SDFD with the direction necessary to be successful.

The Plan establishes a basic foundation from which a firm organizational structure can be built. It identifies a core ideology, clearly defined products and services, and charts a course, as outlined in the initiatives. These initiatives were designed to provide a vision, develop leadership and succession planning, improve organizational unity, and take advantage of technological advances and potential alternative funding sources. Specific measurements have also been developed to determine the success of our outcomes and these will be reported to you on an annual basis. Your feedback will be important in measuring our effectiveness as a member of the City's team and as your partner in achieving the City's vision.

It has become very apparent to me that the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department includes a workforce dedicated to quality service delivery. We look forward to working with the City team and playing an integral role in forging the city's future.

Jeff Bowman  
Fire Chief



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

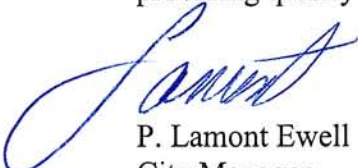
DATE: June 1, 2004  
TO: Members of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department  
FROM: P. Lamont Ewell, City Manager  
SUBJECT: Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

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I am very impressed with the leadership, commitment and effort that went into the development of the Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan. With this document in place, it will be possible for the department to plan its future and address many of the issues raised over the years in a comprehensive and collaborative fashion. There is no doubt in my mind that the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department will be successful in this endeavor.

Understanding that many significant challenges may lie ahead of us, we will need to focus our best efforts toward building a better future. With a clear vision and strong leadership from all levels of San Diego Fire-Rescue, as well as from other City staff, we will overcome these challenges and continue to provide the highest level of service our citizens have grown to expect.

I would like to thank the entire department for its dedication to this planning process and providing quality service to our community.



P. Lamont Ewell  
City Manager



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Five-Year Strategic Plan

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### **A Letter from the Strategic Planning Team**

The idea that such a diverse group of individuals could ever come together and develop a document as foundational and important as this Strategic Plan was a grand idea indeed. But, the success of this adventure proves that San Diego Fire-Rescue Department is much more than its name could ever imply. We are a department whose many divisions strive toward a common goal of public safety. We cannot achieve the highest quality of service if we do not work together as a team and acknowledge our individual strengths and weaknesses. It is this understanding which is central to our plan, and it is this theme which our leaders and managers must continually reflect upon in the plan's utilization.

Public safety work is often described as a "calling." At San Diego Fire-Rescue, we take this concept a bit further, combining a personal need to help others with a job that can be exciting and satisfying. We enhance that experience by deriving an equal amount of satisfaction from interaction with our colleagues behind the front lines.

These are difficult times in which to plan for the future. Our City and State are in financial crisis. Our world is faced with the continuous threat of terrorism and our country has recently experienced this threat on its own soil. The initial meeting for this Strategic Planning effort opened with many questions. Our concerns were financial and motivational. Would there be genuine follow-through, or would this plan be another ream of un-read paper in management's bookshelf?

Despite this well-deserved concern, our team embraced the opportunity to be a part of *change*. Without a doubt, San Diego Fire-Rescue needs to see some changes, and achieving those changes requires planning.

We do not wish to be an "average" department. We plan to go beyond the boundary of the ordinary. We plan to excel. In the course of our discussions, much emphasis was placed on our desire to exceed our industry's standards. We believe that *America's Finest City* deserves *America's Finest Fire-Rescue Department*, and our leadership should never become complacent with simply meeting the standard.

To meet these challenges we must alter the manner in which we do business, and our leaders must adopt a business mentality. We must be creative within financial turmoil that is only predicted to become more desperate. We must find ways to support our employees with the resources to perform their jobs safely and effectively. We must strive to make this department the benchmark which all others will strive to meet.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Five-Year Strategic Plan

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### **A Letter from the Strategic Planning Team (cont'd)**

Developing this strategic plan, while exhaustive for many, has forced us to take an honest look at ourselves. We enjoy the public trust that comes freely because of our title, but we have come to understand that the public and our peers have many misconceptions about our service. We are a service that “no one ever hopes to use, but we’re glad you’re there when we need you.”

Our public and even our own City are unfamiliar with the myriad of services we provide, and not through their fault. We as a department tend to isolate ourselves and fail to educate others about our service.

Our hope is that this plan will serve many purposes. We wish to educate all stakeholders in our service, internally as well as externally. We expect our leaders to build upon the many themes and initiatives discovered during this planning process.

Lastly, we expect that the future leaders of San Diego Fire-Rescue will maintain the strategic planning process. Let no future leaders fail to plan for the success of this department. Let them continue to move forward, inspired by the ideas, dedication and spirit of the department they propose to lead.

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department  
Strategic Planning Team 2003





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Five-Year Strategic Plan

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### Acknowledgements

#### **Strategic Planning Team**

Phyllis Bailey, Payroll Specialist  
Cory Beckwith, Engineer  
Greg Buchanan, Lifeguard Lt.  
Ray Burch, Managing Director, SKOPOS Consulting Group  
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Brian Fennessy, Captain  
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Roger Fisher, QI Manager  
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Ronnie Hicks, Battalion Chief  
Lorraine Hutchinson, Captain  
Bob Jones, Engineer  
Steve Kenny, Fleet Buyer  
Mike Kirkeby, Administrative Aide  
Chris Kugel, Captain  
Greg Lloyd, Firefighter  
Ken Malbrough, Battalion Chief  
Johnny Mikita, Mechanic  
William Modeen, Captain  
Linda Morse, Captain  
Frankie Murphy, Assistant Fire Marshal  
LaDawn Maerin, Administrative Aide  
Debbie Nasta, IS Manager  
Ty Shimoguchi, Firefighter  
Angie Smith, Dispatcher  
Russell Steppe, Engineer  
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Richard Stropky, Lifeguard Sgt.  
Scott Trafton, EMT  
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John Wood, Firefighter  
Frances Wyborne, Sr. Mgt. Analyst

#### **Strategic Sponsor Team**

Rod Ballard, Division Chief  
Jeff Bowman, Fire Chief  
Bruce Cartelli, Division Chief  
Chett Chew, Assistant to Fire Chief  
Frank Dishman, Fleets Manager  
Melanie Doyle, OEP Supervisor  
Jeff Frazier, Deputy Chief  
Augie Ghio, Assistant Chief  
Jon Handley, Deputy Chief  
Susan Harris, Communications Manager  
Ken Hewitt, Lifeguard Chief  
Tracy Jarman, Assistant Chief  
Wayne Johnson, Ch. Op. Officer, SDMSE  
Ed Lehman, Business Rep. Local 127  
Maurice Luque, Supervising PIO  
Monica Morgan, Deputy Chief  
Pat Nuñez, Assistant to Fire Chief  
Sam Oates, Fire Marshal  
Perry Peake, Deputy Chief  
Nancy Roberts, Labor Relat. Rep., MEA  
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Bob Steadman, Deputy Chief

#### **Stakeholder Interview Participants**

James Black, Engineer  
Buz Miller, Captain  
Staley Myers, Engineer  
Tim O'Malley, Engineer  
Tony Pernicano, Engineer





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Charting our Course

When I joined the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) in May of 2002, I recognized a need to create a strategic direction, develop leadership and succession planning, and enhance communications. In order to provide that direction, we initiated a strategic planning process and established a goal of completing a Five-Year Strategic Plan. We formed a strategic planning team from all levels of the organization, including uniformed and non-uniformed staff. We also hired a consultant, Ray Burch, as our coach to help guide us through the process. From that point, a framework outlining specific outcomes and a project methodology was developed in order to measure our success. With our strategic planning team in place, we kicked off the planning process in March of 2003.

The strategic planning process represents a significant effort by many of our members, most particularly, our strategic planning team. The team spent countless hours conducting research and stakeholder interviews, both internal and external, on issues affecting the SDFD and fire service in general. A great deal of thought and discussion centered around the Department's mission, vision and values, its products and services and factors we believe are critical to its success. Careful consideration was also paid to the initiatives created, to ensure they would serve to move our organization forward and prepare it for the future.

It is my belief that the Strategic Plan responds effectively to the challenges we currently face as well as those we see on the horizon. Since the next major step in this process is the implementation phase, the document also contains one-year action plans. These action plans will serve as the basis for implementing our overall strategies identified in the Strategic Plan.

It is with great pleasure that I offer this Strategic Plan to the San Diego Fire-Rescue and the City of San Diego.

Jeff Bowman  
Fire Chief



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## **Project Methodology**

### **Background**

The City of San Diego hired a new Fire Chief, Jeff Bowman, in May of 2002, to lead the Fire-Rescue Department. An initial assessment revealed some organizational issues relative to a lack of strategic direction and leadership, an inefficient structure, budgeting weaknesses, and an inadequate personnel development and succession planning process.

### **Outcomes**

The first step in building a world-class organization is to create a strategic foundation. Specifically, the deliverables of this strategic planning process are:

1. To define the core role and measurable accountabilities of the department.
2. To create a shared vision of the department.
3. To develop key strategic initiatives for the next five years.
4. To build organizational unity by involving all parts of the department in the planning process.

### **Approach**

1. Project design
  - a. Refine the project goals and outcomes.
  - b. Assign project roles and responsibilities.
  - c. Agree on project methodology.
  - d. Review with senior staff.
  - e. Get project approach sign-off from City Manager's Office.
2. Strategic Planning Team
  - a. Develop an invitation message for potential team members.
  - b. Select the Strategic Planning Team.
  - c. Meet with the team to discuss:
    - i. Team charter and expectations
    - ii. Team membership
    - iii. Roles and responsibilities
    - iv. The "game plan"
    - v. Assignments and accountability



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Project Methodology (cont'd)

3. Fire-Rescue Department direction
  - a. Review existing fire service research and benchmarking.
  - b. Identify the key business drivers and trends impacting fire service.
  - c. Conduct a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis using the above information.
  - d. Review the department's core ideology.
    - i. Core purpose
    - ii. Products and services
    - iii. Value proposition
    - iv. Critical success factors
  - e. Draft the essence of the core ideology.
  - f. Review with senior staff.
4. Fire-Rescue Department assessment
  - a. Gather feedback from the department "rank and file" on the short-term and long-term needs of the department.
  - b. Interview select City Administration staff regarding the same needs of the department.
  - c. Review relevant data from the City Council and other community sources related to the issues and direction of the department.
  - d. Summarize the themes and implications of this assessment.
  - e. Review with senior staff.
5. Strategic initiatives
  - a. Determine future requirements
  - b. Assess current capabilities relative to these requirements through a gap analysis process.
  - c. Develop specific initiatives to achieve prioritized future requirements and goals.
  - d. Develop a strategy for each initiative.
  - e. Draft the complete strategic plan.
  - f. Review with senior staff.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Project Methodology (cont'd)**

6. Strategy implementation
  - a. Present the strategic plan to the senior staff for input and approval.
  - b. Present the plan to the City Manager.
  - c. Present the plan to the department staff for input and involvement.
  - d. Assign action and accountability for key components of the strategic plan.
7. Strategic plan progress
  - a. Create a performance measurement system for the plan.
  - b. Review milestones periodically.
  - c. Make “course corrections” as needed.
  - d. Celebrate small successes.

### **Assignments & Accountabilities**

Each segment of the process started with a methodology overview to educate the team members. Sub teams out in the field performed most of the “heavy lifting” for the process by collecting data and formulating written facts and conclusions and then reporting to the total team.





# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## **Executive Abstract**

The Strategic Planning Committee consisted of 32 volunteer employees, representing all ranks, classifications and divisions within San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD). Foundational data identifying the major issues facing San Diego Fire-Rescue Department was obtained through research and interviews of both internal (SDFD personnel) and external sources (non-SDFD individuals; i.e., members of the public and private sectors, including community businesses, City Council, Mayor's office, and other City of San Diego department employees).

Effective organizational change can only occur through cooperation and combined vision; therefore, identifying which issues the department will face over the next five years was seen as the first step toward assuring its future success. The task force revealed nine major areas of concern, which are addressed individually through the strategic initiative process. Solutions to these issues are expected to increase funding sources, mend any torn fences within the department and City organization, and provide a positive direction for the future.

### **Issue No. 1**

As an organization, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department must provide a clear vision and direction for its members. The department must identify how to create, prepare and maintain quality leaders for the future.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 1: Create Strong Leadership and Vision: Moving in the Right Direction as One**

In the continuing effort to provide excellent service to the citizens who live in and visit the City of San Diego, department employees have demonstrated a desire to improve. The department's success relies on visionary leadership with excellence and customer service as a primary goal. Attaining this leadership requires establishing a mentoring program and an officer's academy, and promoting employee development. Encouraging the personal and professional growth of each member will develop leadership at all levels while creating a sense of personal responsibility and accountability throughout the organization.

### **Issue No. 2**

As a public safety service, San Diego Fire-Rescue is accountable to the citizens who live in and visit the City of San Diego. These citizens deserve the finest attention the department can deliver. More importantly SDFD employees must be accountable to each other. Professional behavior is essential both in public and in the workplace.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Executive Abstract (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 2: Promote an Environment of Ownership, Accountability and Professionalism**

In addition to the quality of the services provided, it is important that all employees understand how their individual actions reflect upon the entire department. An approved “code of conduct” must be established to identify acceptable behavior both in public and in the workplace. This “code of conduct” should empower all employees to feel confident in sponsoring an environment of ownership and professionalism.

#### **Issue No. 3**

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department personnel provide numerous services to the public, other City agencies and to each other. It is imperative that staff provide these services in a positive and professional manner. The reputation of the department is based not only on the services it provides, but also on how well these services are provided.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 3: Improve Customer Service**

In order to be considered a quality customer service provider, SDFD must increase its awareness of customer satisfaction. Each member of this department must pledge to improve customer service and hold others to the same standard. Customers must be identified as either internal or external. Surveys must be developed to see if individuals, stations, divisions and the department as a whole are meeting the expectations of its customers.

#### **Issue No. 4**

Erosion of the availability of General Fund monies adversely impacts the department’s ability to provide staff, training, equipment and facility maintenance. San Diego Fire-Rescue must expand its sights to encompass non-traditional funding sources.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 4: Continue to Aggressively Pursue Funding**

The City of San Diego’s General Fund is unable to fund San Diego Fire-Rescue in the manner necessary to operate at maximum efficiency. Maintaining current operational levels will require researching non-traditional funding sources; including state and federal grants, public/private donations and corporate sponsorships, Joint Powers Agreements, implementing new fees for services as well as updating existing fees, and researching possible 501C3 non-profit status.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Executive Abstract (cont'd)**

#### **Issue No. 5**

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department lacks the resources to handle incidents of significant proportion as the Cedar Fire demonstrated. San Diego's geographical location places it in a known wildland urban interface area, on an active earthquake fault, and on an international border. Additionally, the City contains numerous air, sea and land transportation hubs. SDFD must be able to respond appropriately to incidents involving natural disaster, terrorism, hazardous material, high-rise or transportation emergencies. It is only a matter of time before the department's resources will again be stretched beyond their capabilities.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 5: Enhance Our Capabilities As An "All- Risk" Department**

Emergency responders will always be the first to address an emergency incident; it is imperative that they be prepared. Training and preparation must be improved to mitigate any incident effectively and safely, whether the incident results from man-made or natural disaster. Resource allocation, improved communications, response readiness and sufficient funding are all identified as requirements for success in this endeavor. Taking a leading role in coordinating a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional approach will be vital.

#### **Issue No. 6**

Low morale issues adversely impact all personnel within the department and originate from a variety of sources, one of which is a perceived lack of inter-divisional respect and inclusion. All divisions in the department must act in concert to provide the best service to employees and customers. Addressing this issue from the highest level of leadership to the newest person hired is needed to provide cohesive solutions.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 6: Improve Interdivisional Relationships, Respect and Inclusion**

Because the duties and responsibilities of personnel within San Diego Fire-Rescue Department are so varied, there is often little understanding or acceptance of the functions of its different divisions. There is a sense that some employees are more important or more valued than others. This attitude creates a perception that prevents connection throughout the department. It is imperative that leadership serve as the role model communicating the department's vision and improving inter-divisional relationships through trust and respect for each employee and each division.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Executive Abstract (cont'd)

#### Issue No. 7

Creating an atmosphere in which all employees feel valued is a constant goal of this department. However, the act of recognizing outstanding job performance, rewarding a job well done, and promoting qualified individuals is often perceived as arbitrary or subjective in nature. It is the responsibility of the organization to develop and evaluate its human resources. This can best be achieved through employee development and preparation for promotion, as well as the clarification of its requirements and processes.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 7: Improve Rewards, Recognition & Promotional Processes**

Low morale has been identified as a major issue for the department. Improvement can be addressed through recognizing achievement as well as promotions based on job performance. Clearly defined promotional paths for all employee classifications, including criteria or requirements for advancement, would be instrumental in improving morale. Enhancing overall department morale could also be achieved through developing a creative rewards and recognition program, developing a promotional system to fill vacancies as they occur, maintaining current promotional lists, and establishing career development programs for all members of the organization.

#### Issue No. 8

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department must develop a system for the exploration and implementation of technological advances. Using technology to improve the safety of emergency services personnel and enhance the customer service provided by SDFD must remain a high priority. Control of information systems and increased computer training for all employees is essential in order to take full advantage of the technology available to the department.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 8: Proactively Pursue Technological Advances**

The future of technology utilized and purchased by San Diego Fire-Rescue must be addressed through an innovative, cooperative city-wide and department-wide strategic plan. Researching and obtaining the technological advances related to fire apparatus and equipment, marine rescue vehicles, emergency medical equipment, dynamic dispatching, and non-emergency administrative applications require a specialized, proactive, and funded plan of action. This can be accomplished through cooperative efforts with the IT&C department, creating a technical advisory committee, increasing employee training in technology, and exploring new and diverse revenue sources.





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Executive Abstract (cont'd)**

#### **Issue No. 9**

Relations between the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and other city departments are often strained, at best. SDFD has learned that other departments perceive it as arrogant, self-absorbed and claiming an entitlement to preferential treatment. Addressing this misconception is an immediate concern.

#### **Strategic Initiative No. 9: Improve Interdepartmental Relations**

Although San Diego Fire-Rescue Department enjoys an outstanding reputation with the general public, departments within the City of San Diego convey a completely opposite impression. Terms such as arrogant, conceited, and unprepared describe other departments' opinions of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. Recommendations for turning these negative perceptions into positive experiences include utilizing positive networking, greater participation in city-wide functions, interdepartmental team building, promoting mutual cooperation, and "playing by the rules."



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **San Diego Fire-Rescue Department: “The Fire-Rescue Culture”**

The culture of the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department is, in relative terms, as complex as contemporary American culture itself. Like American culture, SDFD does not have a singular culture but is a composite of multiple and varied cultures, each with its own distinct identity, politics, even dialect. SDFD personnel include firefighters, dispatchers, EMTs, lifeguards, paramedics, mechanics, clerical assistants, as well as other professional civilian support and management personnel. A significant portion of SDFD emergency medical response capability is the product of a public-private partnership. Finally, further adding to the complexity of SDFD culture is the fact that the proud professionals who perform these varied functions are represented by three different labor unions. When one considers all of the major facets of SDFD culture, the challenge of fostering a unified and cohesive SDFD culture becomes daunting indeed.

A brief overview of the historical development of SDFD may facilitate an understanding of the depth and significance of its sub-cultures. Following a series of particularly destructive fires through the 1880s, an amendment to the City Charter on August 5, 1889, created the San Diego City Fire Department. Prior to 1889, volunteers handled all fire protection in the City. In 1909, Louis Almgren, who would serve as Fire Chief until his retirement in 1935, began what came to be known as a golden era of expansion and innovation for the San Diego Fire Department. Among his many organizational improvements, Chief Almgren improved working conditions, raised standards of performance and professionalism for firefighters, and established a merit system to facilitate more equitable selection and promotion of personnel. This period also saw significant progress in technological innovation. In 1917, the San Diego City Fire Department became the first fully mechanized major fire department on the West Coast. In addition, in 1919, the San Diego Fire Department christened the first gasoline-powered fireboat in the world.

During this same era, San Diego Lifeguard Service came into existence. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw an influx of people turning to the beaches for their recreational pursuits. Prior to 1918, any water related emergencies that arose were handled by heroic volunteer citizens who happened to be in the right place at the right time and who happened to have the skills necessary to perform water rescues. However, in 1918, after 13 people drowned at Ocean Beach in a single terrible day, the San Diego Lifeguard Service was formed. The City initially appointed three lifeguards and attached the new division to the San Diego Police Department. In the 1920s, Spade Burns was appointed as



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **The Fire-Rescue Culture (cont'd)**

the first Chief Lifeguard, operating out of Police Substation #1, and more stations were added from Ocean Beach to La Jolla in order to broaden lifeguard coverage. During the Great Depression, the City Council attempted to cut lifeguard staffing, but several drownings prompted full restoration of lifeguard protection.

In response to a growing population, advances in technology, and a diversification of responsibilities, the San Diego Fire Department and the San Diego Lifeguard Service continued to expand the breadth and depth of their respective expertise. As the Fire Department grew, it expanded into five specialized divisions designated as Operations, Personnel and Training, Support Services, Fire Prevention, and Administrative Services. The Lifeguard Service divided into two major divisions: Oceanfront Operations and the Boating Safety Unit. Eventually, in Fiscal Year 1997, the two major entities, San Diego Fire Department and San Diego Lifeguard Service, merged into one.

Through the following decades and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, firefighters have taken on additional skills and responsibilities in such areas as hazardous materials, industrial accidents, urban search and rescue, and weapons of mass destruction preparedness. San Diego firefighters must be prepared for nearly every imaginable fire protection problem from wild land to urban high-rise. Lifeguards specialize in areas including marine fire prevention, coastal cliff rescue, swift water rescue, and SCUBA search and rescue. Firefighters and lifeguards alike are required to be, at a minimum, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certified and many firefighters are EMT-Paramedics. In 1979, the Fire Department became a limited 9-1-1 first responder service. In 1990, the San Diego Lifeguard Service dispatch center became a full component of the 9-1-1 dispatch system as well. In Fiscal Year 1998, SDFD entered into a partnership with Rural Metro of San Diego, to provide primary advanced and basic life support ambulance coverage to the City of San Diego. This public-private partnership for emergency medical services was the first of its kind in the country. In 1998, SDFD's Communications Center was accredited as a Center of Excellence in Emergency Medical Dispatching.

During its history, San Diego Fire-Rescue enriched its scope with the expertise of the non-uniformed personnel who manage its budget, payroll, apparatus and equipment acquisitions, facilities maintenance, communications and training centers. Many of these staff members bring a variety of educational and work experience to their positions, ranging from high school diplomas, specialized training and certifications, to post-graduate college degrees. They include clerical assistants, senior clerks, word processing operators, payroll specialists, dispatchers, mechanics, motive techs, storekeepers, stock clerks, administrative aides, public information officers, information systems analysts,



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **The Fire-Rescue Culture (cont'd)**

organizational effectiveness specialists and management analysts. A number of non-uniformed staff have spent the majority of their City of San Diego careers with San Diego Fire-Rescue, sharing a common bond, loyalty and commitment to the department's goals.

While both uniformed and non-uniformed employees of SDFD are subject to the same city rules and regulations, the uniformed members of SDFD are subject to an additional para-militaristic rank and discipline structure. A rigid rank structure is critical to the safe and efficient execution of emergency response. When emergency personnel work an incident, they work together to get the job done. Authority is usually not questioned. Uniformed firefighters and lifeguards are subject to frequent, regular training in order to maintain response readiness. Recruits are taught to do as they are told. However, today's average recruits demonstrate more education and a wider skill-set than did their predecessors. This has resulted in contemporary officers who are more willing to lead by example than by force, to consider the opinions of others, thereby injecting a bit of democracy into decision-making. However, during an emergency response, the officer has the last word and that is recognized by all.

Non-emergency station life for both firefighters and lifeguards is highly social with humorous verbal bantering and other bonding behavior. The amount and quality of the time that the uniformed members of SDFD spend together lends easily to a rapport and loyalty far above that which occurs in normal working relationships. Uniformed personnel commonly refer to coworkers as family. In general, fire department culture is unique in that there is a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood which occurs by mere affiliation. The exact reasons for this "family-hood" are not known. Does it result from the 24-hour living situation, or the amount of time firefighters spend doing things together off duty? Or is it the nature of the work that brings firefighters closer? The fire service is one of the few professions in which personnel risk their own lives to save people they do not know. Whatever the reason, once adopted into the fire service family, a firefighter figuratively inherits family members from all over the country. A language exists which is familiar to every firefighter, no matter how one's individual department conducts business. A firefighter visiting a fire station anywhere in the world is made to feel welcome and at home.

Taking the unique quality of fire service culture one step further, San Diego Fire-Rescue reflects a diversity which is not common among its counterparts in other cities. Diversity in this sense refers to race, ethnicity, culture, age and gender. Prior to the 1900's, SDFD was essentially a white male-dominated department. The tender process of integration





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **The Fire-Rescue Culture (cont'd)**

began in 1919, when the first African American male was hired. As with any introduction of change, this process was not readily accepted and was a tough pill to swallow. The increase in minority and women firefighters entering the work force created a need for a group to represent them. In 1973, Brothers United, SDFF, Inc. was formed. Although this organization was not limited to African Americans, it was designed to represent the underrepresented. While the main purpose of Brothers United was fair representation of minorities, its focal point has been, and continues to be, the recruitment, mentorship and retention of minorities in the fire service. In the late 1980's, Los Bomberos de San Diego and the Women's Issues Committee were created under the direction of Local 145, the Firefighters Union. The overall mission of these two organizations is similar to that of Brothers United.

Often misunderstood, these organizations have been accused of causing more division in the department. Although SDFD has been a leader in the field of diversity, the number of African Americans in upper management (Captain and above) has increased, while the number of entry level employees who are African American has remained about the same in the last decade. Female and Hispanic populations have increased at a better, but still sluggish rate. Therefore, the employee organizations are still needed.

Acceptance and tolerance levels among firefighters have increased. Resistance to change has decreased, albeit not altogether vanished. SDFD continues to be a leader in diversity, but the department still has some work to do in this area. However, it is important to emphasize that, when SDFD personnel are at work, they do work well together and get the job done. Hence their value proposition: *first in...last out*. Fortunately, in the heat of battle, there are no color lines.

Interestingly, the very cohesiveness which is so functional to the mission of uniformed SDFD personnel tends to alienate non-uniformed members within the department, as well as personnel outside the department and among the public. Even uniformed members of different divisions within the department find themselves at odds on occasion. Outsiders often perceive firefighters and lifeguards alike as exclusive and unapproachable.

One of the mandates of this strategic planning process will be to reduce the perception of inapproachability of the uniformed members of SDFD, both within and outside the department. The current culture of SDFD is one of proud, strong, and protective family units who are sometimes distrustful of and distrusted by one another. Regular participation by all members of the department in the strategic planning process must be geared toward overcoming mistrust and miscommunication among the different functions



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **The Fire-Rescue Culture, (cont'd)**

and divisions of the department. Uniformed personnel must come to recognize and value the expertise both of other uniformed divisions as well as non-uniformed department members. Sense of family is what makes SDFD the high performing organization that it is. If the strategic planning process succeeds at uniting the several families of SDFD into one extended family, then it will succeed at blending the multiple cultures of SDFD into one SDFD culture.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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# Core Ideology



## ***San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Vision***

**San Diego Fire-Rescue Department will be a recognized leader in safety services by:**

- Honoring public trust through professionalism, community service and fiscal responsibility
- Performing as a cooperative community-based emergency response team
- Promoting a culture of technological innovation and progressive training
- Mentoring our members through excellent leadership at all levels of the organization
- Achieving and maintaining nationally recognized accreditation
- Providing for the health and safety of our members





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### *San Diego Fire-Rescue Department*

#### *Our Mission...*

*“To serve the community of San Diego by providing the highest level of emergency/rescue services, hazard prevention and safety education ensuring the protection of life, property and the environment”*



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### ***San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Values***

<b>Professionalism</b>	Recognizing our high visibility, we will ensure that our actions and appearance reflect favorably on the City of San Diego and the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
<b>Respect</b>	We will always respect each other and the public
<b>Integrity</b>	We will hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards of ethical behavior
<b>Dedication</b>	Recognizing our commitment to serve, we will consistently go above and beyond the call of duty
<b>Excellence</b>	We will strive to increase our knowledge, skills and abilities through comprehensive, innovative and specialized training programs



## Guiding Principles

**If...**

- **I have taken safety into consideration**
- **It is ethical**
- **It is legal**
- **It is the right thing for those we serve**
- **It is the right thing for each other**
- **It is within our policies and procedures**
- **I can take PRIDE in it**
- **I am accountable, then**
- **Just do it .... humbly**



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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# *San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Value Proposition*

## *First In...Last Out...*

“First-in/Last-out” represents a value which is held in the highest regard by the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. This core value is the basis for what has become the “911” Emergency Fire –Rescue [“All-Risk”] Response System in San Diego, California. SDFD personnel, from every division within the organization, are proud to be “first-in” at an emergency incident or request for public service and the “last-out” to complete the task, ensuring the best possible protection and safety for their customers. SDFD’s belief in this value reflects a total team concept; i.e., the interaction of personnel in fire suppression and prevention, beach and waterway safety, hazard mitigation, inspection and code enforcement, emergency medical services, dispatch, information technology, equipment and facility acquisition and maintenance, administrative and human resources activities. Every participant in this process is primed to be “first-in” and “last-out,” regardless of his/her function. This overall dedication to thoroughness, responsibility and commitment makes “First-in/Last-out” a universal value proposition for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

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## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

"The City of San Diego has been guided by these Norms & Values for over 10 years. These timeless values have served as a model for the Fire-Rescue Department's Vision, Mission and Values. We remain committed to honoring these values to create a respectful and inclusive organizational culture."







# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Products and Services

### I. Protection and Emergency Services

- A. Fire Suppression
- B. Aircraft Firefighting
- C. Wildland Firefighting
- D. Hazardous Materials Incident Response Team
- E. Metro Arson Strike Team
- F. Explosive Device Team (Recognition and Disposal)
- G. Technical Rescue
  - 1. Vehicle
  - 2. Airport
  - 3. High Angle/Low Angle
  - 4. Confined Space
  - 5. Trench
- H. Aquatic Rescue
  - 1. Swift Water
  - 2. Water
  - 3. Cliff
  - 4. Dive
  - 5. Boat
- I. Marine Firefighting
- J. Beach Management
- K. Homeland Security
- L. Urban Search and Rescue Task Force
- M. 911 Call-taking and Emergency Response Triage
- N. 911 Pre-arrival Instructions

### II. Community Education

- A. Safety Education Programs
  - 1. Fire safety demonstrations (mobile platform via trailer)
  - 2. Senior assisted fire safety education
  - 3. CPR classes
  - 4. Fire Cadet Program
  - 5. Junior Lifeguard Program
  - 6. Bridge to the Beach
  - 7. Learn to Swim for Free
  - 8. Operation Waterproof
  - 9. Project Heartbeat



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## **Products and Services (cont'd)**

- B. Station and Facilities Tours
- C. Apparatus and equipment demonstrations
- D. Recruitment
  - 1. Diversity Outreach Opportunity Recruitment (DOOR) Program
- E. Public Information Office
  - 1. Media Liaison

## **III. Prevention, Enforcement and Investigation**

- A. Fire and Marine Safety Code Enforcement/Inspection Programs
  - 1. Fire Company Inspection Program
  - 2. High Rise Inspection
  - 3. Special Events Permitting
  - 4. Brush and Weed Abatement Program
  - 5. Parking Enforcement
  - 6. Underground/Above Ground Tank Inspections
  - 7. Combustible/Explosive and Dangerous Materials (CEDMAT) Inspections
  - 8. Boating Safety Inspections
  - 9. Active Beach and Water Patrols
  - 10. Pre-fire Planning
- B. Law Enforcement
  - 1. Fire Cause and Origin Determination (MAST)
  - 2. Beaches and Boating
  - 3. Fish and Game

## **IV. Medical Services**

- A. Advanced and Basic Life Support
- B. Emergency Medical Response and Transportation
- C. General Medical Transportation
  - 1. Interfacility Transport
  - 2. Critical Care Transport
  - 3. Wheelchair Van and Alternative Transportation Services
- D. Patient and Insurance Billing



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Critical Success Factors

### I. Ensure Operational Readiness

- A. Have an adequate number of staff to perform the job
  - 1. Achieve, at a minimum, the national average of 1.95 firefighters per 1,000 population in accordance with the Center for Performance Management
  - 2. Achieve .15 lifeguards per 1,000 population in accordance with the proposed Public Safety Ordinance
  - 3. Maintain dispatcher per call ratio in compliance with National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
  - 4. Establish ratio of uniformed to non-uniformed to provide sufficient staff support
- B. Have enough equipment that is safe and ready for operations
  - 1. Front-line apparatus down time not to exceed 15% in accordance with historical data
  - 2. Unscheduled CAD down time not to exceed .5% in accordance with Department Budget Performance Measure
- C. Have a replacement plan for equipment and apparatus
  - 1. Fire equipment will be replaced in accordance with Department Standard
  - 2. Fire apparatus will be replaced within a maximum of 12 years in accordance with NFPA 1901
  - 3. Marine equipment and apparatus will be replaced in accordance with Division Standard
- D. Have personnel that are healthy and ready to respond
  - 1. Achieve firefighter injuries with time lost not to exceed 1.14% per 1,000 incidents in accordance with Center for Performance Management
  - 2. Achieve worker compensation claims per 100 firefighters not to exceed 16.4 % in accordance with Center for Performance Management

### II. Provide Quality Response

- A. Our responses must be timely
  - 1. The first-in engine company for fire suppression service will respond within 6 minutes 90% of the time with the ultimate goal of 5 minutes (4 minute travel, 1 minute chute) 90% of the time in accordance with NFPA 1710
  - 2. A full first alarm assignment will respond within 10 minutes 90% of the time with the ultimate goal of 9 minutes (8 minute travel, 1 minute chute) 90% of the time in accordance with NFPA 1710



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Critical Success Factors (cont'd)

3. First responder or higher level capability will arrive at emergency medical incidents within 5 minutes (4 minute travel, 1 minute chute) 90% of the time in accordance with NFPA 1710.
4. A unit with advanced life support capability will arrive at emergency medical incidents within 9 minutes (8 minute travel, 1 minute chute) 90% of the time in accordance with NFPA 1710.
5. Dispatch call takers will answer 911 calls within 10 seconds 90% of the time and assign first unit within 60 seconds 90% of the time in accordance with Department Standard
6. Confine fire to room of origin 85% of the time in accordance with historical data
- B. Our resources must be allocated appropriately
  1. Fire stations must support distribution of firefighters to meet established response times
  2. Achieve 10 lifeguard towers per one mile of beach (no standard exists)
  3. Achieve an average of 6.0 rescue boats patrolling 34,940 acres of water which includes Mission Bay and Pacific Ocean up to 3 miles out in accordance with the proposed Public Safety Ordinance

### III. Effective Community Education and Public Relations

- A. We must provide adequate community education hours
  1. The Lifeguard Division will educate over 2,000 students a year through school visits/lectures
  2. The number of hours spent per month on fire safety education programs such as school visits to stations, brush management, CPR/AED, will be collected in single database
  3. Increase the number of safety prevention actions to water users (warnings) by 2.5% (no standard exists)
- B. We must be active in the community
  1. The number of apparatus requests received per month will be collected in single database
  2. The number of hours spent per month with community planning groups will be collected in single database
  3. A process will be developed to evaluate effectiveness of Fire Prevention/Education programs



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Critical Success Factors (cont'd)

- C. Our recruitment efforts should be effective
  - 1. Monitor the City's semi-annual equal employment opportunity report
  - 2. The total number of annual recruitment hours will be collected and monitored for effectiveness
  - 3. The Lifeguard Division will conduct over 100 hours of recruitment annually and monitor effectiveness

### IV. Ensure A Safe and Prepared Community

- A. We must inspect for safety
  - 1. Maintain 60-day overdue inspection at less than 6% of the inspections in progress in accordance with Department Standard
- B. We must plan for the emergency or disaster
  - 1. Each fire company will review, prepare or update one pre-fire plan each quarter and all pre-fire plans will be updated in less than five years
  - 2. Inspections for new buildings will be completed when notified/assigned by Fire Prevention
  - 3. BCs will participate in two pre-fire plans with units from their battalion per month
  - 4. Incident Management Team training will be developed and delivered to ensure an adequate pool of qualified personnel
- C. We must effectively train ourselves for emergencies and day-to-day operations
  - 1. A process will be developed to evaluate on an annual basis, crew and multi-crew performance through use of performance-based measurements programs for truck companies, engine companies, ambulances, lifeguards, etc.
  - 2. A training record system will provide for analysis of training needs
  - 3. A process will be developed to evaluate effectiveness of training
- D. We must see a decrease in the indicators that show a lack of safety through public education programs
  - 1. Obtain 90% compliance with incident reporting requirements in order to extract reliable data such as fire-related deaths
  - 2. The number of residential structure fires per 1,000 population should not exceed 1.09% in accordance with Center for Performance Management





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Critical Success Factors (cont'd)**

3. Reduce the number of boating citations by 2.5% (no standard exists)
4. Reduce the number of water related accidents by 2.5% (no standard exists)

### **V. Be Fiscally Responsible**

- A. We must balance our products and services with costs to maintain appropriate service levels
  1. Personnel, operating, and capital vehicle expenditures should not exceed \$96 per capita in accordance with the Center of Performance Management
  2. Maintain ranking within top three in the cost-lost index of large, metro fire departments
  3. Cost per beach patron should be less than \$1.00 (no national standard average cost per boater visiting Mission Bay should be less than \$6.00)



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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# Strategic Initiatives



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 1: Create Strong Leadership and Vision: Moving in the Right Direction as One**

San Diego Fire-Rescue enjoys a long tradition of providing quality service to the citizens of San Diego. Never stagnant, never satisfied with status quo, San Diego Fire-Rescue employees have steadily shown a willingness to participate in their destiny, in the shaping of their department's scope and values and above all, in the continuing effort to provide excellent service to the people who live in and visit the City of San Diego.

However, as a city department, San Diego Fire-Rescue appears isolated from other departments and does not maintain effective lines of communication with City leaders. Internally, SDFD has developed operations vs. support staff mentality. These tendencies have created the perception of a department which is aloof from others and a "house divided" from within. Additionally, the department contends with budgetary constraints and related cutbacks. Instead of defeating San Diego Fire-Rescue, however, these negative factors have sparked the impetus for growth and change, for setting new goals and aspirations.

The members of this department have demonstrated a desire to improve. Accomplishing this improvement requires the department to develop a business model reflective of its strategic plan. The strategic plan must identify how to create and prepare future leaders within SDFD. Leadership can be found at all levels, in all ranks and classifications. It relies upon positive communication from top to bottom; it mentors new employees and recognizes the contributions of the more experienced ones. It creates wholeness out of parts; one department out of many divisions. Rather than "cogs in a wheel" employees perceive themselves as the force that moves the wheel forward.

As an organization, SDFD must provide a clear vision and direction for its members. All members are equally important, whether they are administrative, clerical support, mechanics, dispatchers, lifeguards, paramedics, or fire operations personnel. A mentoring program fosters mutual trust and individual accountability in each individual while creating a more inclusive environment. The establishment of a mentoring program, along with an officer's academy and an employee development plan for each employee would go a long way toward developing future SDFD leaders. In concert with the promotional process, employee development will ensure that each member of the department understands the mission, goals and objectives of San Diego Fire-Rescue and the City of San Diego as a whole.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 1 (cont'd)**

In practical terms, a goal is a dream with deadlines. The first step toward achieving SDFD's goals will be the realization of its five-year strategic plan. Employees from all divisions have demonstrated pride in this organization and enough faith in its viability to participate in the strategic planning process. Fueled by increased employee participation, this forward momentum can only gather strength, culminating in the department's recognition as America's Finest Fire-Rescue Department.

#### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Develop a Business Model
- Develop leaders for the future
- Establish a Mentoring Program
- Establish an Officer's Academy
- Establish a development plan for each employee
- Commit to requiring personal accountability and responsibility for actions

#### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Feedback from staff and line personnel
- Commitment to shared vision by all members
- Individual development programs
- Participation in employee development programs
- Completion of development programs

#### **Recommended Measurements of Effectiveness**

### **Strategic Action 1.1: Develop a Business Model**

- 1.1.A A business model will be completed with short, medium, and long-range goals identified
- 1.1.B All divisions of the department will be represented
- 1.1.C Improve inter-department communication for all members



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 1 (cont'd)**

- 1.1.D Provide opportunities for uniform and support staff to attend teambuilding sessions to promote inclusive behaviors
- 1.1.E Increase and maintain a high level of participation in citywide functions
- 1.1.F Provide Fire-Rescue Department representation in community groups

### **Strategic Action 1.2: Develop Leaders for the Future**

- 1.2.A Staff, line and prospective officers are provided leadership, management and supervisory training annually
- 1.2.B Staff, line and prospective officers are held accountable for high levels of performance and positive behavior

### **Strategic Action 1.3: Establish a Mentoring Program**

- 1.3.A Staff and line officers are provided a mentor for guidance and direction
- 1.3.B Staff and line officers consistently seek, receive and consider input and feedback from mentors
- 1.3.C Staff and line officers set a positive example through personal conduct

### **Strategic Action 1.4: Establish an Officers Academy**

- 1.4.A Newly promoted officers will attend a comprehensive leadership academy

### **Strategic Action 1.5: Establish Employee Development Plans**

- 1.5.A Every employee is provided problem solving training
- 1.5.B Every employee is afforded increased training opportunities at work
- 1.5.C Supervisors and employees seek out and provide increased training opportunities

### **Strategic Action 1.6: Commit to Personal Responsibility and Accountability**

- 1.6.A Members hold each other accountable for high levels of performance and positive behavior
- 1.6.B Members will consistently respect and follow directions and decisions
- 1.6.C Members will consistently adhere to the City's Norms and Values





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 2: Promote an Environment of Ownership, Accountability and Professionalism**

As a public safety service, San Diego Fire-Rescue is accountable to citizens and visitors in the City of San Diego. However, merely stating that the department is accountable is not enough. The concept cannot be summed up that simply.

It is important that SDFD's customers, stakeholders, employees, as well as city leaders, understand that the department intends to take proactive steps toward ensuring an environment in which employees are empowered to make decisions and stand accountable for those decisions. Peers should feel comfortable that their co-workers represent each other as professionals. The City of San Diego should be confident that SDFD represents the city in the finest manner.

Before accountability can become a viable force, employees must be confident that they have ownership of their job duties. It is unfair to hold someone accountable for a job that is over-managed by others, or constantly second-guessed. Managers and supervisors must foster a climate of mentorship and guidance rather than micromanagement. The department must train managers and supervisors in these delegation and mentorship skills. The ideal climate is envisioned as one in which employees are spurred to take new initiatives without managerial suggestions.

Job duties must be clearly defined and established. A clear chain of supervision must be defined so that each employee knows to whom he/she is accountable. In addition to understanding job duties, it is important that all employees understand how their behavior and actions may reflect upon their profession, the department and the city. A clearly defined "Code of Conduct" must be constructed so that there is no question as to what embodies best behaviors and actions.

When job duties are not completed, or when there is evidence of conduct that is unbecoming, there must be follow-through by management. Not only must there be follow-through appropriate to the pre-established disciplinary process, but the decisions and actions made by managers must be consistent and fair across the entire department.

Although the issues of discipline must be addressed, the positive aspects of ownership and accountability should also be emphasized. Promoted correctly, the two should create an environment of professionalism and pride. Employees who are empowered to make decisions and learn from them are employees who take pride in their profession and develop skills that can make them more promotable.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 2 (cont'd)**

Professionalism extends beyond one's actions in public. It encompasses actions and behaviors which occur on a daily basis, away from the public eye. It involves pride in one's work and attention to detail in the most mundane of chores. It reminds personnel that the vehicles they drive are a billboard for their profession. It makes them aware that the things they say or do might wind up in the daily newspaper or the 6 o'clock news.

It does not take much to tarnish the reputation of a department. Today, despite the finest traditions of public safety services, many fire and rescue departments come under the negative scrutiny of the public and the press. It is important that every employee, from the newest field employee to the Fire Chief, understands and embraces the concepts of professional behavior and personal accountability. Members of San Diego Fire-Rescue choose to define their professionalism and train in these concepts as vigorously as they train for emergencies.

### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Form a task force to develop a process that will quell rumors throughout the department and incorporate this process into the code of conduct.
- Develop a committee to review City and department standards concerning behavior, conduct, and begin the development of a department "Code of Conduct"
- Review and improve the current supervisory structure including probationary employee supervision and the probationary report/review process
- Review how department supervisors/managers conduct discipline and develop a methodology for ensuring that managers conduct discipline in a uniform manner
- Build an educational component into the discipline process to correct employee behaviors which result from ignorance. Such a component would present the offending employee with an opportunity to correct his/her error as well as educate the workforce in general. It is understood that the standard discipline procedures will apply to repeat offenders.
- Provide regular training on department standards related to conduct and behavior
- Provide regular training to all staff on public relations policies and skills
- Provide management staff regular training on skills/tactics which foster employee ownership
- Create a clear communications plan concerning standards and Code of Conduct



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Strategic Initiative 2 (cont'd)

- Create a standardized discipline matrix
- Ensure that existing programs/systems reward and recognize employees who demonstrate a commitment to ownership and accountability

### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- A plan exists to review and make conclusions regarding any negative incidents concerning conduct by any employee
- Incidents concerning failure to act/perform according to standards are few and those that do arise are dealt with according to the established disciplinary process
- A retrospective review by Human Resources staff of disciplinary action by the department shows consistency in discipline from supervisor to supervisor
- A Discipline Matrix is created and implemented throughout the department
- Employees are familiar with job responsibilities and follow through with responsibilities within their job description
- Employees feel that an environment exists where they can take ownership of tasks within their job responsibilities and be held accountable
- Employees are recognized through existing programs for their commitment to accountability and for their professionalism

### **Recommended Measurements of Effectiveness**

#### **Strategic Action 2.1: Provide management staff training on skills and tactics that foster employee ownership of job duties and special projects**

- 2.1.A Develop management training curriculum
- 2.1.B Identify venues for training delivery
- 2.1.C Identify staff to provide training and funds necessary to deliver
- 2.1.D Research cost and quality of contracting out for training



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 2 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 2.2: Develop a “Code of Conduct” that encompasses current departmental and City regulations**

- 2.2.A Form a committee to develop a “Code of Conduct” and a communications/marketing plan
- 2.2.B Form a task force to develop a process that will quell rumors throughout the department and incorporate this process into the code of conduct.
- 2.2.C Develop an on-going training program to instill these behaviors
- 2.2.D Include this training in new hire orientation for all employees

#### **Strategic Action 2.3: Develop curriculum which instructs all employees how to interface best with the public**

- 2.3.A Form a committee to develop curriculum which specifically targets employee interaction with external stakeholders
- 2.3.B Develop and deliver this training program to all employees
- 2.3.C Include this training in new hire orientation for all employees

#### **Strategic Action 2.4: Perform a yearly audit of discipline by managers reviewing consistency of discipline**

- 2.4.A Develop a schedule that this audit would be conducted
- 2.4.B Identify manager responsible for ensuring audit is conducted
- 2.4.C Ensure mechanism is in place to capture all appropriate data
- 2.4.D Develop procedures/policy for annual audit
- 2.4.E Hire staff/personnel necessary to ensure that such an audit can be performed



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 2 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 2.5: Create a standardized “Discipline Matrix” which will ensure consistency of discipline and inform employees of expectations**

- 2.5.A Identification of all methods of discipline and employee development are identified
- 2.5.B Identify the range and types of inappropriate behavior that may occur both on and off duty
- 2.5.C Develop the Discipline Matrix to tie together methods of discipline with behaviors
- 2.5.D Set and follow levels of discipline acting collaboratively and consistently, Labor and Management working together
- 2.5.E Build an educational component into the discipline process to correct employee behaviors which result from ignorance. Such a component would present the offending employee with an opportunity to correct his/her error as well as educate the workforce in general. It is understood that the standard discipline procedures will apply to repeat offenders.





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 3: Improve Customer Service**

Throughout this five-year strategic plan document, customer service descriptive terms are used on a regular basis. As one reads the document, expressions such as “honoring the public trust,” “providing products and services,” “practicing fiscal responsibility” and “treating our internal and external customers well” appear in most of the strategic initiatives. Ultimately, delivering excellent service to everyone is a hallmark indicator of an organization focused on customer service excellence.

It is important to understand that SDFD is a customer based organization with products and services offered by a family of dedicated professionals. The department’s products and services have a huge impact on those whom SDFD professionals contact, assist and rescue. This group is called “external” customers. The dedicated family of employees consists of all SDFD workers and extends to the entire City of San Diego workforce. This group is known as “internal” customers. The lasting impression made with both internal and external customers is an indication of what the department is and how it is judged. SDFD expects to meet or exceed customer expectation 100% of the time.

In order to succeed and be considered a quality customer service provider, the department needs to apply a few required elements to every interaction. First and foremost, practicing common courtesy must be the norm. SDFD personnel must adopt and practice the active concept of treating each customer, regardless of rank or function, with consideration. It is the process of imparting value to every person’s contribution or need.

Then, personnel must determine the customer expectation, actively communicate with all parties involved and treat each customer as one would expect to be treated oneself. This includes using words such as “Please” and “Thank you” on every contact, strictly adhering to the department’s values and guiding principles (see below) and always giving more than expected.

If its personnel follow these basic tenets of customer service, SDFD will continue to learn and grow as a professional and caring organization and will meet or exceed customer expectation 100% of the time.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 3 (cont'd)

#### Actions

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Establish open communications with our customers at all levels
- Develop a consistent customer service message and communication method
- Improve relationships between staff, internal customers and citizens
- Create team to review customer service
- Employee accountability via the use of guiding principles
- Improve customer service

#### Success factors

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Results from mailed out customer service surveys
- Improved relations and morale with internal customers
- Increased participation in employee customer relations activities
- Improved accountability for customer service

#### *Recommended Measures of Effectiveness*

### Strategic Action 3.1: Establish open communications with our customers at all levels

- 3.1.A Identify all customers internal and external
- 3.1.B Create models for customer service inquiries/input
- 3.1.C Have team identify customers access points to service
- 3.1.D Create forums for internal and external customer service exchanges

### Strategic Action 3.2: Develop a consistent customer service message

- 3.2.A Provide staff and resources for customer service education
- 3.2.B Provide staff and resources to review all documents and manuals so they consistently emphasize a customer service approach
- 3.2.C Ensure all supervisors and staff have access to the manuals and policies



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 3 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 3.3: Improve relationships between staff, internal customers and citizens**

- 3.3.A Seek better written data on a regular basis from all customers internal and external
- 3.3.B Encourage across the board input and feedback on our customer service performance
- 3.3.C Invite a broad range of our customers to events, into departmental planning process and evaluation
- 3.3.D Develop assignment diverse teamwork on internal customer issues and solutions

#### **Strategic Action 3.4: Create team to review customer service**

- 3.4.A Identify what is working well
- 3.4.B Identify strategies for collecting and evaluating data
- 3.4.C Identify trends, and improvement possibilities

#### **Strategic Action 3.5: Employee Accountability**

- 3.5.A Acknowledge that we are each accountable to provide excellent customer service
- 3.5.B Employees hold each other accountable for improving customer service
- 3.5.C Review causes related to customer service that are below standard or less than 100% of what is expected
- 3.5.D Design training to improve below standard customer service less than expected

#### **Strategic Action 3.6: Improve customer service practices**

- 3.6.A Create a document that reinforces the customer service standards for all employees
- 3.6.B Conduct new hire integration orientation sessions to foster the “customer service” attitude
- 3.6.C Encourage insightful and critical feedback on progress
- 3.6.D Expectation of 100% compliance with these standards



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 4: Continue to Aggressively Pursue Funding**

San Diego Fire-Rescue's traditional source of funding has been the City of San Diego General Fund which is reliant upon, among other things, federal, state and local government funding. Fluctuations in statewide and national economic trends impact these revenue sources, as do policy decisions made at all levels. Inconsistent and shifting priorities have caused a ten-year erosion of the department's budget, resulting in staffing reductions and a corresponding impact to the department's ability to maintain current support and operational levels. To ensure San Diego Fire-Rescue's continued ability to carry out its mission effectively, and assist the Mayor and Council in protecting quality of life by improving fire protection, SDFD must be adequately funded. In addition to the General Fund, creative revenue sources such as grants, fees-for-service, Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs) and corporate sponsorships must continue to be pursued. On-going efforts to explore these possibilities may reveal opportunities to augment the department's budget, in order to staff, train and equip personnel and maintain facilities appropriately.

For at least the past decade, providing fire, rescue, and medical services to San Diego within budgeted allocations has been unattainable. Consequently, apparatus and equipment have aged and many are unreliable. Funding is inadequate for the proper outfitting and maintenance of apparatus and equipment. Communications within the department and with the public at large, including the 9-1-1 system, tremendously rely upon computers, which require replacement, upgrades, and technical assistance. Because of insufficient funding, the department's ability to dispatch, respond and communicate in the field has been jeopardized. Further, the department's fixed assets, such as fire stations, lifeguard towers, and the maintenance facility have not been maintained adequately. While limited replacement programs have been in place for apparatus, equipment and technology and a capital improvement program for fire station construction and renovation, these programs in large part have not been funded to the degree necessary for their fulfillment. Historically, the department has continued to request the funding to provide an acceptable level of service delivery through the annual budget process. Unfortunately, many of these programs have gone unfunded.

The most prominent among today's grant opportunities are those which address the issue of Homeland Security. This includes equipping and training firefighters to respond to acts of terrorism. San Diego Fire-Rescue has received 13 grants which are tied to Homeland Security, with an additional grant pending. These grants will go a long way toward providing some of the equipment and training needed for successful response to



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 4 (cont'd)**

incidents associated with weapons of mass destruction. The processes and reporting requirements stipulated in these grants, coupled with the management oversight required, mean additional support staffing will be required. Without on-going commitment to this effort, the department and City will more than likely miss potential funding opportunities.

Public/private donations and partnerships, and corporate sponsorships in the form of cash and/or in-kind services represent another innovative funding source. The San Diego Regional Fire-Rescue Helicopter Program is an example of this type of creative funding. Several agencies and private donors have given cash as well as in-kind donations of equipment, services and staffing. These efforts have culminated in the lease and operation of a helicopter, without the use of the General Fund. Also, the San Diego Medical Services Enterprise is a good example of a public/private partnership that has been extremely successful.

The Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) is another funding concept. Since approximately 1986, San Diego Fire-Rescue has served as a contractor for the County of San Diego, providing response to hazardous materials incidents through a Joint Powers Agreement. The contract for this service generates revenue to cover its operating costs. Such regional services could be expanded to include swift water, heavy rescue/confined space rescue, aviation and canine search. Grant funding may be a viable option in financing the initial training and outfitting costs associated with providing regional services. Thereafter, the service costs could be recouped via contractual agreements with agencies which are unable to respond to incidents requiring these specialty skills and/or equipment.

Additional cost recovery efforts such as fees for service should be considered. Over the years the department has implemented various types of fees. The department has evaluated and/or revised all of its fees over the past two years and will continue to do so annually to reflect cost adjustments in labor and materials. The annual fee revision could dovetail with the annual budget adjustments in labor, non-personnel, and overhead costs. Although much work has been done in this regard, additional funding sources may be available by researching other jurisdictions' fee programs. In addition, San Diego Fire-Rescue participates in a number of large city-wide special events, but only a portion of the direct costs are recoverable. The department should continue to solicit the City Manager's support for full cost recovery. Further, many San Diego businesses require that their employees be trained in fire safety procedures. San Diego Fire-Rescue could provide this type of training for a fee. When developers cause a change in population density, the department should consider charging a capacity fee. This fee would be imposed when developers build multiple-family dwellings where single- or double-



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 4 (cont'd)

family dwellings previously existed. The increase in inhabitants causes additional safety issues for both Police and Fire departments. In addition, the establishment of 501C3 non-profit status for the department should be explored as well. This may open the door to additional outside funding opportunities.

#### Actions

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Establish a department-wide prioritized “unmet needs” list, including equipment and apparatus replacement and facilities maintenance
- Continue to provide sound, accurate and current fiscal information to City Management on a regular basis
- Continue managing existing spending plans and allow for reprioritizing plan as changes in fiscal issues arise
- Educate and partner with city leadership and community members to identify and pursue funding needs.
- Perform periodic analysis of service level cost efficiency provided by the department with an eye toward reducing services as necessary
- Investigate implementation of First Responder assessment fees, brush assessment fees, punitive false alarm fees, etc. comparable to other large metropolitan fire departments
- Update existing fees on a regular basis
- Investigate implementation of a Police/Fire capacity fee
- Continue to educate and market SDFD unmet needs to the public (i.e., philanthropic gateway, community presentations) and elected officials
- Acquire staffing dedicated to the pursuit, application, processing, and management of grants and corporate sponsorship programs
- Acquire staffing dedicated to acting as the government relations liaison to identify pending state and federal legislative or mandated actions with potential fiscal impact
- Leverage pressure to ensure that the City of San Diego receives its appropriate share of grants (i.e., on a per capita basis)
- Evaluate the feasibility of a JPA to provide specialized regional services
- Explore possibility of becoming an Enterprise fund department rather than a General fund department
- Consider new services to the public which could generate corresponding fees
- Investigate acquiring 501C3 status in order to apply for private foundation grants





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 4 (cont'd)**

- Create a plan to pursue revenue
- Explore contract dispatching for other jurisdictions
- Increase revenue generated by the SDFD Regional Training Facility
- Maintain contractual ownership and control of profit funds from SDMSE
- Participate in the on-line Gateway Sponsorship Program

#### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Strategic actions are included into senior management initiative process
- On-going fiscal status reports continue to be submitted to City Management
- Grants are monitored to determine success of awards received and appropriate allocations for San Diego
- Report on feasibility of expanding services provided via JPA is published
- Report on possibility of becoming an Enterprise fund department is published
- New or revised fee structures successfully implemented
- Fees are updated on an annual basis
- Capacity fee is successfully implemented
- 501C3 status is established
- A plan to pursue various creative revenue sources is established and monitored
- Contract dispatching is expanded
- Replacement/maintenance schedules are established and followed
- Legislation is monitored to identify potential impacts and take appropriate action

#### **Recommended Measures of Effectiveness**

### **Strategic Action 4.1: Prioritize Department-Wide Unmet Needs**

- 4.1.A Senior staff and unions develop prioritized list of needs that could be filled via creative revenue opportunities
- 4.1.B Assign appropriate staff members to pursue agreed upon priorities through these revenue sources
- 4.1.C Identify short- and long-term replacement and maintenance needs and establish plan to rectify needs within budget



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Strategic Initiative 4 (cont'd)

### **Strategic Action 4.2: Proactively Pursue General Fund Money**

- 4.2.A Continue to provide accurate financial reports at regular intervals, such as the Current Year Monitoring, which reflect accurate expenditures and projections
- 4.2.B Continue to provide reports to the Manager and City Council reflecting accurate expenditures and needs, especially when there is an unexpected need
- 4.2.C Continue to provide annual request for needs, in conjunction with the annual budget preparation process, and repeat those needs yearly, if necessary, to maintain an accurate record of the need
- 4.2.D Educate and partner with city leadership and community members to identify and pursue funding needs.

### **Strategic Action 4.3: Pursue, Apply, Process and Monitor Grants/Corporate Sponsorship**

- 4.3.A Identify funding to acquire dedicated staffing for the function of grant application and monitoring, corporate sponsorship opportunities
- 4.3.B Influence elected officials, business and community leaders to ensure appropriate allocation of funding for San Diego
- 4.3.C Monitor funding awarded to determine success rate

### **Strategic Action 4.4: Identify, Analyze and Monitor Legislative Actions**

- 4.4.A Identify funding for dedicated staffing for the function of researching legislative actions with potential fiscal impact
- 4.4.B Influence local and national elected officials to ensure representation on all issues with potential fiscal impact
- 4.4.C Monitor to determine effectiveness in this area

### **Strategic Action 4.5: Pursue JPA for Specialized Regional Services**

- 4.5.A Pursue a joint MOU for all regional helo/air support providers
- 4.5.B Establish a task force to evaluate expansion of regional services
- 4.5.C Develop JPA for services of interest by other jurisdictions
- 4.5.D Monitor to determine effectiveness in this area



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Strategic Initiative 4 (cont'd)

### **Strategic Action 4.6: Pursue Fee-For-Service Implementation**

- 4.6.A Establish review committee to examine current service structure for possible new fee-generation services
- 4.6.B Contact other fire departments nationally to identify fee for services programs
- 4.6.C Solicit feedback from San Diego community for services of interest and willingness to pay
- 4.6.D Monitor to determine effectiveness in this area

### **Strategic Action 4.7: Update Existing Fees Regularly**

- 4.7.A Develop a mechanism for annual fee updates
- 4.7.B Obtain City Manager's support for concept of annual updates
- 4.7.C Monitor to ensure completion

### **Strategic Action 4.8: Establish Police/Fire Capacity Fee**

- 4.8.A Develop Police/Fire capacity fee program
- 4.8.B Investigate implementation in other fire departments nationally
- 4.8.C Monitor to ensure completion

### **Strategic Action 4.9: Pursue 501C3 Status**

- 4.9.A Assign appropriate staff to investigate acquiring 501C3 status
- 4.9.B If possible, acquire 501C3 status

### **Strategic Action 4.10: Create a Plan to Generate Revenue**

- 4.10.A Assign a project lead
- 4.10.B Dedicate necessary resources
- 4.10.C Review Fire-Rescue business procedures for fee based enterprise fund possibilities
- 4.10.D Obtain input, feedback, and support from all appropriate personnel



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 4 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 4.11: Expand Contract Dispatching**

- 4.11.A Assign responsibility to expand contract dispatching
- 4.11.B Dedicate necessary resources
- 4.11.C Monitor progress to determine effectiveness

#### **Strategic Action 4.12: Increase revenue generated by Regional Training Facility**

- 4.12.A Assign responsibility to Training Division
- 4.12.B Dedicate necessary resources



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 5: Enhance Our Capabilities as an “All-Risk” Department**

As the fire storms of October, 2003 roared through San Diego, taking lives and destroying property; it became frighteningly apparent that San Diego Fire-Rescue was not staffed, equipped, or trained to manage a large scale wildland urban interface fire effectively. A hard look at the department reveals a probable inability to deal with similar large scale events such as earthquake, terrorist attack, high rise structure fire, civil disorder and hazardous materials incidents. The fire storms opened the eyes of the public to the inadequacies within SDFD. This revelation may have engendered a support base for increased funding, at the local government level as well as the private/corporate sponsorship level. San Diego Fire-Rescue must take advantage of this opportunity to acquire the resources needed to ensure its success as an “All-Risk” department, able to handle all types and sizes of incidents and ensure the safety of the city’s residents and visitors.

The City of San Diego is at risk for a variety of reasons. Geography puts the city in an extremely volatile wildland urban interface area, as well as on an active earthquake fault. A port city, located near one of the busiest international border crossings in the world, San Diego also has miles of coastline which must be protected. The San Diego International Airport, military installations, convention center, Qualcomm Stadium, and the newly completed Petco Park are all inviting targets for potential terrorist action. An attack at any of these facilities could easily develop into a large scale mass casualty incident.

The close examination which revealed the department’s inadequacy in handling a major incident also identified an organization which struggles to manage its day-to-day emergency responses. Several factors contribute to this situation. Unsupported or under supported growth in both new development and redevelopment projects has led to a serious shortage of the necessary resources. Traffic gridlock makes it extremely difficult to achieve contract mandated response times. The department’s aging fleet has led to numerous occasions when it was unable to maintain the minimum number of apparatus on the street. The growing tourist industry has resulted in higher attendance at beaches, attractions and an increase in general street traffic. All of these factors, combined with an ever-tightening budget, conspire to create a potentially dangerous situation for San Diego residents, visitors and employees.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 5 (cont'd)**

San Diego Fire-Rescue is presented with the challenge of discovering how to provide the resources, staffing, stations, apparatus, training and equipment necessary to manage day-to-day emergency responses and the large scale incidents which can and will occur. There is no quick fix. But the department stands ready to examine all avenues of improvement: alternative sources of funding, more extensive training and management of existing resources. Additionally, the department should maintain a place in the public vision, a place which calls attention to its effectiveness, its readiness, and its role as a safety provider. That exposure and rededication to public service could result in financial benefit to San Diego Fire-Rescue, and ultimately benefit the city as a whole.

#### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Increase staffing to meet national standards
- Reduce response times
- Review Standard Operating Procedures
- Purchase new apparatus
- Build new Fire Stations, Lifeguard Towers, and other support facilities
- Replace/remodel outdated Fire Stations, Lifeguard Towers, and other support facilities
- Increase support staff
- Improve training for everyday operations and large scale incidents
- Train, staff, equip and support a three deep incident management team

#### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Decreased fire loss
- Decreased fire deaths
- Decreased injury rates
- Improved Cardiac Arrest outcomes
- Funding commitments for purchases of new apparatus and equipment
- More effective response to large scale incidents





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 5 (cont'd)

- Budgeting for increased staffing
- Decreased apparatus downtime for repair
- Increased training standards

#### **Recommended Measurements of Effectiveness**

##### **Strategic Action 5.1: Increase staffing to meet National Standards**

- 5.1.A Determine appropriate staffing needs
- 5.1.B Achieve a minimum of 1.95 firefighters per 1,000 and .15 lifeguards per 1,000
- 5.1.C Maintain dispatcher per call ratio in compliance with National Emergency Number Association (NENA)
- 5.1.D Determine funding sources for staffing
- 5.1.E Promote and hire to fill needs

##### **Strategic Action 5.2: Reduce response times**

- 5.2.A Achieve a response time goal of five (5) minutes or less 90% of the time
- 5.2.B Achieve a full first alarm response time of eights (8) minutes or less 90% of the time
- 5.2.C Evaluate dispatch procedures
- 5.2.D Adjust deployment strategies

##### **Strategic Action 5.3: Review standard operating procedures**

- 5.3.A Update for new threats
- 5.3.B Creation of new SOP's as policies and procedures change

##### **Strategic Action 5.4: Purchase new apparatus and boats**

- 5.4.A Achieve a maximum twelve (12) year life span for fire apparatus
- 5.4.B Front line apparatus down time not to exceed 15%
- 5.4.C Achieve an average of six (6) rescue boats
- 5.4.D Survey all existing vehicles and boats to determine needs
- 5.4.E Determine funding sources for purchases
- 5.4.F Create phase in plan to meet national standards for apparatus and boat life span



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 5 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 5.5: Build new Fire Stations, Lifeguard Towers, and other support facilities. Replace/remodel existing stations, towers, and other support facilities**

- 5.5.A Ensure an initial response time of five (5) minutes or less 90% of the time and a full first alarm response time of eight (8) minutes or less 90% of the time
- 5.5.B Achieve standard of seven (7) lifeguard towers per .6 miles of beach
- 5.5.C Upgrade existing facilities
- 5.5.D Survey existing facilities to determine needs
- 5.5.E Determine funding sources for new construction and remodels

#### **Strategic Action 5.6: Increase support staff**

- 5.6.A Determine appropriate staff levels
- 5.6.B Promote and hire to fill vacancies

#### **Strategic Action 5.7: Improve training for everyday operations and large scale incidents**

- 5.7.A Create a training records system
- 5.7.B Evaluate individual, crew, and multi crew performance through performance based measurements
- 5.7.C Create large scale training exercises

#### **Strategic Action 5.8: Train, staff, equip and support a three deep incident management team**

- 5.8.A Emergency Operations Center
- 5.8.B Disaster Operations Center



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 6: Improve Interdivisional Relationships, Respect and Inclusion**

San Diego Fire-Rescue Department is a department plagued by low morale. Contributing factors to this low morale include a lack of leadership, communications and standards. In addition, there is the sense that some employees feel (or are?) more important or valued than others. This attitude creates a “one up/one down” perception that prevents connectivity throughout the department. The promotional procedure and the concept of employee entitlement have also been identified as important concerns.

Contending with its morale issues presents San Diego Fire-Rescue with a significant challenge. Accepting this challenge will impact and engage all personnel. The first step begins with leadership, and particularly with providing vision, an inspired view of the direction in which San Diego Fire-Rescue needs to go. Leadership flows from the Chief completely through to the very last person hired. Leadership sparks the drive toward excellence. Leadership is the key to ensuring that personnel maintain a focus on what is expected of each individual in the department. Concurrent with leadership is common courtesy: the active concept of treating each member, regardless of rank or function, with consideration. It is the process of imparting value to every person’s contribution.

Mentorship, the act of providing guidance and motivation, is seen as an important process in San Diego Fire-Rescue Department. The success of mentorship is measured by the performance and attitude of the most recently hired person. The success of the team that is San Diego Fire-Rescue relies upon ensuring that the newest team member understands the core values and the vision of the department as well as the 25 year veteran does.

Understanding each other’s job functions is also recognized as conducive to cooperation and the achievement of mutual respect. Additionally, the opportunity to explore career paths is rated highly on the road to personal and organizational success. Working knowledge provides for higher overall performance and greater retention in the work place.

True “employee entitlement” can be defined as those compensations which the City of San Diego guarantees its employees as a condition of their employment. Examples of this interpretation include salary, health insurance, and the payment of industrial leave for an injury which happened on the job. However, there is an increasingly pervasive definition of entitlement which can be interpreted as what the employee *perceives as owed* to him/her, regardless of cause. An example of this interpretation is an employee’s



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 6 (cont'd)**

getting hurt off the job, then claiming that the injury was job related and thus entitling the employee to compensation. This misinterpretation of the concept of “entitlement” has become widespread within San Diego Fire-Rescue.

Communication provides the framework for linking all of these perceptions, actions and possibilities. Communication needs to flow through every level of the department. It is important that each division understands and agrees with the department’s vision and core values. It is important that each division maintains the bond of trust that binds each facet of the department into a cohesive, functioning whole. The only way to achieve this is to be open and honest and repeat the same message from top to bottom.

### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- We will be accountable and responsible for complying with the City’s Norms and Values
- Improve open communications throughout all levels of the organization
- Develop a consistent disciplinary process and documentation
- Provide cross-divisional training for employees for career opportunities
- Establish mentorship programs for employees at all levels
- Review staffing levels and workload distributions for all employees
- Create an alignment within the department that fosters respect for all divisions
- Improve relationships between staff, labor unions and chiefs

### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Knowledge of inter-department workings
- Inter-department development programs
- Fewer disciplinary problems
- Greater employee retention
- Employee suggestion programs



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Strategic Initiative 6 (cont'd)

### *Recommended Measurements of Effectiveness*

#### **Strategic Action 6.1: Employee Accountability**

- 6.1.A Acknowledge that a one-up/one-down exists within the department
- 6.1.B Employees hold each other accountable
- 6.1.C Team building sessions-clear expectations
- 6.1.D Entitlement
- 6.1.E Hold all employees accountable for their actions & improving morale

#### **Strategic Action 6.2: Open Communications**

- 6.2.A Team to update distribution system
- 6.2.B Fast turn around times in response to deadlines
- 6.2.C Message is consistent when repeated
- 6.2.D Quarterly newsletter
- 6.2.E Computer Website
- 6.2.F Website "Ask the Chief"
- 6.2.G Encourage "Push Back"
- 6.2.H Entitlement culture

#### **Strategic Action 6.3: Disciplinary Process**

- 6.3.A The level is higher
- 6.3.B Better working conditions
- 6.3.C Supervisors held accountable for documented information
- 6.3.D All evaluations are completed in a timely manner
- 6.3.E Reduced number of complaints

#### **Strategic Action 6.4: Training**

- 6.4.A Faster turn around time in response to deadlines
- 6.4.B Confident workers/improved self esteem
- 6.4.C Number of employees ready for interviews
- 6.4.D Fewer numbers of injuries
- 6.4.E Funding for better training



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 6 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 6.5: Rewards and Recognition**

- 6.5.A Implementation of programs
- 6.5.B Surveys from employees

#### **Strategic Action 6.6: Staffing Levels/Work Loads**

- 6.6.A Fewer transfers
- 6.6.B Worker friendly environment
- 6.6.C Faster turn around for deadlines
- 6.6.D Turn around time to fill vacancies

#### **Strategic Action 6.7: High Performing Team**

- 6.7.A Become value-centric
- 6.7.B Have clarity of vision
- 6.7.C Create dynamic tension
- 6.7.D Form work groups to keep current and follow through

#### **Strategic Action 6.8: Improve Respect and Inclusion**

- 6.8.A Create a document reinforcing the behavioral standards expected of all employees
- 6.8.B Conduct new hire integration orientation session to foster the “We” attitude
- 6.8.C Respect all divisions for the value they add to the department
- 6.8.D Encourage insightful and critical feedback on progress
- 6.8.E Expectation of a hundred-percent compliance with these standards
- 6.8.F Foster ongoing dialogue between lifeguard & fire personnel and support informal mechanisms designed to foster a team environment





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 7: Improve Rewards, Recognition & Promotional Processes**

The greatest asset of any organization can be found in its human resources. Employees who feel valued and are recognized for this value tend to achieve a higher level of productivity and sustain positive morale. San Diego Fire-Rescue, a diverse organization in terms of the services it provides and the scope of its employees, is no exception to this theory. Rewards and recognition of achievement, as well as promotion within the various career ladders are areas that affect all personnel. Historically plagued by budgetary constraints and perceived inequities, these areas have become sources of discontent and disillusion among the members of the San Diego Fire-Rescue organization.

San Diego Fire-Rescue employees tend to consider their participation in the organization as a “calling” and not merely a source of employment or career choice. Uniformed personnel consider their actions “part of the job” and not “heroics.” They perform their routine duties as well as those which occur in life-endangering situations with equal measures of commitment. Non-uniformed personnel often feel that their actions are overlooked or considered by *others* to be “part of their job,” almost as though what they do requires no care, skill or commitment. These statements are typical for most high performing employees.

As an organization, San Diego Fire-Rescue has attempted to develop programs that recognize and reward high performing employees. Historical lack of adequate funding has caused the demise of many of these programs, giving the impression of a lack of commitment on the part of management. As a result, SDFD employees have developed a “laissez faire” attitude toward participating in or supporting any program offered by the department.

Along with rewards and recognition, research has identified promotions as a major concern for San Diego Fire-Rescue employees. Many employees are confused by the current promotional process and have become disillusioned with the system. This is true for both uniformed and non-uniformed staff. It is the responsibility of the organization to develop its human resources. This can best be achieved through preparation for promotion, as well as clarification of its requirements and processes. Additionally, providing opportunities for the skill development required to attain the next level within classification series, or even to branch out into new avenues of experience, will result in an enriched and energized work force.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 7 (cont'd)**

San Diego Fire-Rescue must create an atmosphere in which its employees feel valued, via various mechanisms for the recognition of exceptional performance. Non-traditional methods, preferably those which are not reliant on the annual budget cycle, should be sought out. Further, a comprehensive personnel development program should be explored and implemented, with the goal of equipping current personnel with the knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve their highest potential.

#### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Provide creative ways to recognize and reward employees
- Develop leaders for the future
- Establish clearly defined promotional criteria
- Strive to establish a promotional system which fills vacancies as they occur
- Maintain promotional lists that are current

#### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Feedback from staff and line personnel
- Individual development programs
- Promotional process outcomes
- Staffing levels in all divisions of the organization
- Promotional lists are always current
- All actions will be monitored in the form of initiatives

#### **Recommended Measures of Effectiveness**

### **Strategic Action 7.1: Provide creative ways to recognize and reward employees**

- 7.1.A Research is conducted to identify non-traditional methods utilized by other municipalities and the business community
- 7.1.B Programs are developed utilizing traditional and non-traditional funding sources



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 7 (cont'd)**

- 7.1.C Programs are fully marketed, both internally and externally to our customers

### **Strategic Action 7.2: Develop leaders for the future**

- 7.2.A Existing and future organizational leaders are provided leadership, management and supervisory training with annual refresher courses
- 7.2.B Pre or post-promotional academies are developed for selected ranks above the entry-level position
- 7.2.C Participation in employee development programs offered at the local, state and federal-level
- 7.2.D Development of career development guides for all components of the organization (to meet promotional criteria) in conjunction with the promotional process

### **Strategic Action 7.3: Establish clearly defined promotional criteria**

- 7.3.A Position descriptions are reviewed and updated, as needed
- 7.3.B Promotional job announcements are reviewed, updated and utilized to identify criteria
- 7.3.C Criteria are distributed and available to all members of the organization
- 7.3.D A cooperative relationship is established with City Personnel
- 7.3.E Obtain support from City Personnel

### **Strategic Action 7.4: Support a promotional system which fills vacancies as they occur**

- 7.4.A Support is received from City Personnel, Civil Service Commission and labor organizations
- 7.4.B A cooperative relationship is developed with all promotional system stakeholders

### **Strategic Action 7.5: Maintain promotional lists that are current**

- 7.5.A Promotional testing is on an established schedule
- 7.5.B Timelines are developed to monitor life of promotional lists
- 7.5.C Promotional lists are promulgated prior to the expiration of active list



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 8: Proactively Pursue Technological Advances**

What are San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's immediate technological needs? What will take the department into the future? Although the department is quite proficient at keeping current in fire fighting and lifesaving technologies, it has considerable work to do in the area of technology that will improve daily non-emergency activities.

Technological advances affect every aspect of daily life, and San Diego Fire-Rescue must embrace these improvements while using them to the department's benefit. Maintaining its position on the cutting edge of the fire service will require the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department to continue to be proactive in several areas of technology. The department needs to confirm the areas in which technology is already effective, identify areas in which technology could be applied, and recognize where it has failed in the implementation of technology. The status of technology, as it applies to San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, is currently in danger of spilling over into an area where it will be totally out of control, and not implemented in a department-wide focused manner.

San Diego Fire-Rescue must develop a system for exploring and implementing technological innovations. Determining how to apply technology toward ensuring the safety of its emergency services personnel, while simplifying their tasks in the field, will always be the department's highest priority. However, information systems is the fastest growing area in technology. For the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department to be successful in implementing any plan for the future, control of information systems and mastery of the computers which provide those systems, is essential. Continual upgrading of computer hardware and accompanying software will be crucial to remaining in front of technological advances, rather than trying to catch them as they pass by. Funding sources for the acquisition of these items must go beyond the traditional. New revenue sources need to be investigated. Education in the area of technology must also be pursued steadily. Developing employee skill level, not only to recognize, but to maximize the possibilities of technology available to the department, is critical to a successful future.

#### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Create a Fire Information Technology – Technical Advisory Committee
- Embark in the creation of an Information Technology Strategic Plan for the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
- Explore revenue sources to provide for technology advances and replacements



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Strategic Initiative 8 (cont'd)

- Research new technology (tools, equipment, apparatus, and safety measures) as they become available
- Train all members in computer use and Information Technology

### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Create an Information Technology Technical Advisory Committee and funnel technology implementations through this group
- Create an Information Technology Strategic Plan
- Allocate resources (staff) and funding to obtain a strategic plan for technology
- Training effectiveness as measured by reduction of the number of requests for assistance from users, and Information Systems staff efficiency in resolving issues
- Identification of new revenue streams to implement and upgrade technology

### **Recommended Measurements of Effectiveness**

## **Strategic Action 8.1: Create an Information Technology Advisory Committee**

- 8.1.A Senior Staff identifies members of this committee
- 8.1.B Advisory Committee should consist of divisions procuring and implementing technology (i.e. Communications, EMS, Training, Special Ops, Operations, Hazard & Prevention, Hazmat, etc)
- 8.1.C Establish operating parameters and guidelines for committee
- 8.1.D Senior Staff to identify leadership of committee (chair person)
- 8.1.E While the process to create the IT Strategic Plan is aligning itself, embrace technology implementations that are occurring today
- 8.1.F Advisory Committee should be charged by leadership to work together to align SDFD to the City of San Diego Information Technology standards and initiatives as outlined in the City's IT Strategic Plan
- 8.1.G Advisory Committee should document areas where the City IT Strategic Plan cannot be adhered to
- 8.1.H Advisory Committee should meet monthly and move to quarterly meetings as needed



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 8 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 8.2: Create an Information Technology Strategic Plan (ITSP)**

- 8.2.A Identify funding to hire a consultant to assist in the creation of ITSP
- 8.2.B Hire a consultant for the creation of the Information Technology Strategic Plan
- 8.2.C Identify project manager for ITSP
- 8.2.D Identify key individuals in the organization who will participate in this process
- 8.2.E Allocate resources (staff and funding) towards the successful and expedient creation of this plan

#### **Strategic Action 8.3: Explore revenue sources for technology**

- 8.3.A Identify staff that will pursue new revenue sources for technology (i.e. grants, joint ventures with other agencies, partnerships)
- 8.3.B Utilize funds for the process of creating an Information Technology Strategic Plan
- 8.3.C Utilize funds for technology training of all staff (Field, Administrative, Communications, Information Systems)
- 8.3.D Utilize funds for the purchase and implementation of new technologies
- 8.3.E Utilize funds for replacement of older equipment
- 8.3.F Utilize funds for a replacement fund for future replacement of new technologies

#### **Strategic Action 8.4: Research New Technology**

- 8.4.A New technologies to be brought to the Fire IT Technical Advisory Committee (IT-TAC)
- 8.4.B Fire IT-TAC to review research and reply to new technology uses as presented by any staff member
- 8.4.C Identify staff from different divisions who will attend conferences and trade shows to evaluate use of technology in the fire service
- 8.4.D Provide funding for conference and trade show attendance for staff
- 8.4.E Fire IT-TAC to advise on implementation of new technologies as needed





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### Strategic Initiative 8 (cont'd)

#### **Strategic Action 8.5: Train SDFD staff in computer use and Information Technology**

- 8.5.A Establish a training program for different user groups (Field, Administrative, Communications, and Information Systems) in computer literacy and utilization
- 8.5.B Conduct bi-annual/annual In Service Training (IST) dedicated to Information Technology
- 8.5.C Provide the funding to accomplish training programs in Information Technology
- 8.5.D Funding should include staff to dedicate to ongoing training in the IT field



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative Number 9: Improve Interdepartmental Relations**

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department enjoys an outstanding reputation from all external stakeholders for its emergency response, public relations and public trust. To be completely successful, however, the department must also cultivate an equivalent reputation for reliability in its relations with its business partners in City government.

Research indicates that some city departments perceive a cultural arrogance on the part of the Fire-Rescue Department in the course of routine city business. Several city departments view SDFD as resistant to change and unwilling to accept professional advice. During the interviews it was also implied that SDFD isolates itself from other City departments. Additionally, understaffing in SDFD's administrative support sections impedes timely response to deadlines or requests for information. All of this results in strained relationships with other City departments.

San Diego Fire-Rescue has recognized the need to improve its relations with City departments by positively networking with professionals and utilizing resources from other City departments. Problem solving methodologies must be developed and maintained between SDFD and other departments to effect cooperation.

SDFD must develop a strategic plan that will identify its diverse products and services and determine the fiscal impact of delivering those services. Mini-academies demonstrating the Department's products and services should be offered to City Administration representatives on an annual basis.

By marketing a strategic plan; respecting input from City leaders and increasing the level of participation in citywide events, San Diego Fire-Rescue will align itself with City departments in a spirit of cooperation and teamwork.

### **Actions**

Our actions in response to the identified issues include:

- Provide adequate staff support for Fire-Rescue Administration
- Deliver interdepartmental relationship building
- Market a Strategic Plan
- Familiarize City stakeholders with Fire-Rescue operations
- Participate in Citywide functions
- Promote interdepartmental feedback



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Strategic Initiative 9 (cont'd)

### **Success Factors**

We can determine whether we have been successful in this strategic initiative by measuring the following:

- Positive feedback from City stakeholders
- Successful stakeholder academies
- Increased participation at citywide functions
- Improved relations with City leaders

### **Recommended Measures of Effectiveness**

#### **Strategic Action 9.1: Provide trained support staff for Fire-Rescue administration**

- 9.1.A Fill administrative vacancies promptly
- 9.1.B Fill administrative vacancies with experienced and qualified personnel
- 9.1.C Develop administrative mentoring program for personnel on light duty

#### **Strategic Action 9.2: Sponsor interdepartmental relationship building**

- 9.2.A Network with and utilize resources of other City departments
- 9.2.B Schedule facilitated relationship building and problem solving sessions with other City departments

#### **Strategic Action 9.3: Market a Strategic Plan**

- 9.3.A Provide input to and receive direction from City leaders to determine department goals and objectives on an annual basis
- 9.3.B Identify Fire-Rescue Department products and services
- 9.3.C Identify the fiscal impact of providing necessary services
- 9.3.D Improve the equipment purchasing process
- 9.3.E Demonstrate Fire-Rescue Department results and services provided to the community during annual stakeholder familiarization sessions



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 9 (cont'd)**

#### **Strategic Action 9.4: Familiarize City stakeholders of Fire-Rescue Department operations**

- 9.4.A Develop and conduct a mini-academy for City and Community Leaders on an annual basis
- 9.4.B Provide ride along opportunities to City and Community leaders quarterly

#### **Strategic Action 9.5: Participate in citywide functions**

- 9.5.A Increase and maintain presence at City Council meetings
- 9.5.B Proactively participate in City special events and ceremonies
- 9.5.C Participate in charitable events sponsored by other City departments
- 9.5.D Continue leadership role in National Management Association

#### **Strategic Action 9.6: Promote interdepartmental feedback**

- 9.6.A Develop a customer service form for City departments we do business with to analyze our effectiveness
- 9.6.B Engage in open and honest communication related to the feedback

#### **Strategic Action 9.7: Adhere to citywide policies**

- 9.7.A Senior Staff direction and support
- 9.7.B Educate staff on policies
- 9.7.C Accept professional advice
- 9.7.D Collaborate on policy development



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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# **Strategic Initiative Year One Plans**



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 1: Create Strong Leadership and Vision: Moving in the Right Direction as One Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Develop a Business Model
  - A. Identify committee members to develop business mode
  - B. Improve communications between individuals and divisions
  - C. Develop team leaders from staff and operations to conduct department wide teambuilding sessions.
  - D. Identify activities to improve relations with other City agencies
  - E. Establish speaker's bureau to participate with community groups
2. Develop Leaders for the Future
  - A. Develop career paths for all members
  - B. Establish officer/supervisor academies
  - C. Identify training goals of operations officers and support staff
  - D. Identify City training programs for all members
3. Establish a Mentoring Program
  - A. Establish mentor pool for all members
  - B. Identify Local, State & Federal training for mentors
  - C. Synchronize training with performance and accountability
4. Establish an Officer's Academy
  - A. Develop curriculum for an officer's academy
  - B. Require all newly promoted officers to attend academy
5. Establish Employee Development Plans
  - A. Develop career paths for all members
  - B. Establish annual training requirements for all classifications
6. Commit to Personal Responsibility and Accountability
  - A. Require consistent discipline
  - B. Advertise shared vision expectations
  - C. Identify City training opportunities for all members
  - D. Coordinate personal accountability with mentoring program



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 2: Promote an Environment of Ownership, Accountability and Professionalism**

#### **Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Develop a “Code of Conduct” and a Communications/Marketing plan
  - A. Form a committee to develop
  - B. Develop on-going training program
  - C. Include training at new hire orientations for all employees
  - D. Form a Task Force to develop process that will quell rumors
2. Provide management staff with training on skills that foster employee ownership of duties and special projects
  - A. Research cost and quality of contracting out for training
  - B. Develop or utilize established, recognized training curriculum targeting specific skill sets
3. Perform a yearly audit of discipline by managers reviewing consistency of discipline
  - A. Identify a manager responsible for ensuring this function is completed and/or hire staff necessary to support this function
  - B. Ensure mechanism is in place to capture all appropriate data





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 3: Improve Customer Service Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Establish Open Communications with our customers at all levels
  - A. Assign staff to identify all customers internal and external
  - B. Post address for customer service inquiries on the website
2. Develop a consistent customer service message
  - A. Ensure that SDFD employees receive customer service education
  - B. Ensure SDFD documents and manuals consistently emphasize a customer service approach
  - C. Ensure all employees have access to the manuals and policies
3. Improve relationships between staff, internal customers and citizens
  - A. Seek better written data on a regular basis from all
  - B. Encourage across the board input and feedback on our performance
  - C. Invite a broad range of our customers to events, into departmental planning process and evaluation
  - D. Actively attend community meetings seeking input on customer service delivery
4. Create a team to review customer service
  - A. Identify what is working well
  - B. Identify strategies for collecting and evaluating data
  - C. Identify trends and improvement possibilities
5. Employee Accountability
  - A. Create a document that reinforces the customer service standards for all employees
  - B. Acknowledge that we are each accountable to provide excellent customer service
  - C. Employees hold each other accountable for improving customer service
  - D. Expectation of 100% compliance with these standards
6. Improved customer service practices
  - A. Conduct new hire integration orientation sessions to foster the “customer service” attitude
  - B. Encourage insightful and critical feedback on progress



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 4: Continue to Aggressively Pursue Funding Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Establish a Department-wide “unmet needs” list
  - A. Senior staff and union leadership develop prioritized list of needs that could be filled through creative revenue opportunities
  - B. Assign appropriate staff members to pursue agreed upon priorities through these revenue sources
2. Acquire dedicated staff and resources to pursue, apply, process and manage revenue opportunities
  - A. Justify additional resources for this purpose
  - B. Hire and train staff
  - C. Increase revenue generation at Training Facility
  - D. Monitor revenue/grant awards to determine success rate
3. Create a plan to pursue revenue opportunities
  - A. Assign a project lead
  - B. Dedicate necessary resources
  - C. Plan should include at a minimum increased revenue generation by Training Facility and grant funding and appropriate allocation of grant funding for San Diego
  - D. Obtain input, feedback and support from all appropriate staff
4. Establish JPAs for specialized regional services
  - A. Pursue joint MOU for all regional help/air support providers
  - B. Establish a task force to evaluate expansion of regional services
  - C. Develop JPA for services of interest by other jurisdictions
  - D. Monitor to determine effectiveness
5. Address Revenue Issues
  - A. Hire grant writer and accounting staff
  - B. Research/identify/apply for grant, endowment and Homeland Security funding
  - C. Research/identify possible business sponsors
  - D. Research/identify areas of potential public/private partnerships
  - E. Identify possible fee based business procedures
  - F. Identify Operations personnel from all levels to participate in outlay allocation
6. Establish Equipment Replacement Plans
  - A. Identify individual to inventory and monitor equipment status
  - B. Identify long-term replacement needs for all equipment (apparatus and technological)
  - C. Identify long-term maintenance needs for all equipment (apparatus and technological)



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 4 Action Plan (cont'd)**

- D. Research nationally accepted standards of equipment usage, repair and replacement
  - E. Prepare proposed schedules to comply with “D” above
7. Research Legislative Actions
- A. Identify staff liaison to government relations responsibilities
  - B. Research/identify state legislative actions or mandates associated with fire/medical services
  - C. Research/identify federal legislative actions or mandates associated with fire/medical services
  - D. Report potential fiscal impact of pending legislation
8. Training Opportunities
- A. Identify personnel capable of and interested in instructing others
  - B. Identify appropriate outside training, seminar, and conference opportunities
  - C. Fund attendance for one person
  - D. Prepare training program for relevant SDFD personnel based on identified outside training
  - E. Identify best option to disseminate training information
  - F. Conduct training sessions for SDFD personnel



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 5: Enhance Our Capabilities as an “All-Risk” Department Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Evaluate needs
  - A. Staffing
  - B. Apparatus
  - C. Equipment
  - D. Support Facilities
  - E. Communications
2. Review Funding Options
  - A. Budget
  - B. Grants
  - C. JPA's
  - D. Donations
3. Upgrade Training
  - A. Create a training records system
  - B. Create a large scale training exercises
  - C. Train personnel to support Incident Management Team(s)
4. Review standard Operating Procedures
  - A. Upgrade for new threats
  - B. Create a Target Hazard database
5. Reduce response times
  - A. Monitor chute times
  - B. Adjust deployment strategies
  - C. Evaluate and enhance dispatch procedures
6. Establish specifications for new apparatus and equipment
  - A. Fire apparatus
  - B. Boats
  - C. PPE
  - D. Communications



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 6: Improve Interdivisional Relationships, Respect and Inclusion Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Establish Open Communications throughout department
    - A. Assign staff to update distribution system; i.e. bulletins & email
    - B. Post address for “Ask the Chief” in quarterly newsletter website
  2. Develop a consistent disciplinary process and documentation
    - A. Ensure that SDFD supervisors attend city wide discipline training.
    - B. Ensure SDFD administration and operational manuals are consistent with citywide per manual and discipline rules
    - C. Ensure all supervisors have access to the manuals
  3. Improve relationships between staff, unions and chiefs
    - A. Seek better written data on a regular basis from all unions
    - B. Encourage across the board participation in committee, re: various interests
    - C. Invite people to events, into budget planning process, employee of the quarter, rewards program, etc.
  4. Create team to review staffing levels and work loads
    - A. Identify vacancies if any
    - B. Identify strategies for collecting workload data, impacts etc.
    - C. Develop staffing formula for both operational and support staff
- 
1. Employee Accountability
    - A. Acknowledge that a one-up/one-down attitude exists within the department
    - B. Employees hold each other accountable for improving morale
  2. Improve Respect and Inclusion
    - A. Create a document that reinforces the behavioral standards of all employees
    - B. Conduct new hire integration orientation sessions to foster the “We” attitude
    - C. Respect all divisions for the value they add to the department
    - D. Encourage insightful and critical feedback on progress
    - E. Expectation of 100% compliance with these standards
    - F. Foster ongoing dialogue between lifeguards and fire personnel and support informal mechanisms designed to foster a team environment



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiatives 7: Improve Rewards, Recognition and Promotional Processes**

#### **Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Recognize and reward employees
  - A. Create a committee comprised of a cross section of the department.
  - B. Conduct research to identify traditional and non-traditional rewarding methods.
  - C. Formulate research findings into recommendations
2. Develop leaders
  - A. Identify training level and needs for existing command-level officers and captains.
  - B. Review past Engineer & Captain's Academy curriculum for applicability
  - C. Identify existing employee development programs available at the local, state and federal level
  - D. Coordinate development of career guides with determining promotional criteria, academy curriculum and available training, to ensure compliance with all areas
3. Clearly defined promotional criteria
  - A. Review Position Descriptions for all job classifications to ensure completeness; update as needed.
  - B. Review Job Announcements for all job classifications to identify criteria; update as needed
  - C. Develop a method to advertise promotional criteria effectively for all job classifications
4. Fill vacancies as they occur
  - A. Establish a cooperative relationship with City Personnel, Civil Service Commission, labor organizations and other promotional system stakeholders.
  - B. Review current process for viability of implementing this initiative
  - C. If viable, garner support to embrace changes in systems.
5. Maintain Promotional Lists
  - A. Review current active promotional lists for all job classifications, to determine expiration dates.
  - B. Develop timelines to track upcoming promotions for the next 5 years



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 8: Proactively Pursue Technological Advances Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Create a Fire Information Technology – Technical Advisory Committee (IT-TAC).
  - A. Senior Staff identifies members of the Fire IT-TAC.
  - B. Senior Staff establishes operating guidelines for Fire IT-TAC.
  - C. Assign members to the Fire IT-TAC.
  - D. IT-TAC to meet monthly and move to quarterly as needed.
2. Pursue revenue sources for technology.
  - A. Identify staff that will create a “technology needs list”.
  - B. Identify staff that will be dedicated to pursue new revenues for technology and/or combine with the pursuit of revenues for other Fire “unmet needs”.
3. Commence steps towards the development of an IT Strategic Plan.
  - A. Justify need for Fire Information Technology Strategic Plan (ITSP).
  - B. Senior staff to support and sponsor the ITSP.
  - C. Obtain funding to hire an ITSP Consultant.
  - D. Identify Project Lead for ITSP development.
  - E. Create time line for completion of ITSP.
  - F. ITSP should include an implementation plan for SDFD.





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Strategic Initiative 9: Improve Interdepartmental Relations Year One Plan (FY2005)**

1. Provide adequate staff support for Fire-Rescue administration
  - A. Identify and train light duty personnel for staff positions
  - B. Analyze the number of staff hours required versus the number of staff hours available to justify additional staff positions
  - C. Identify ratio of uniform to non-uniform staff needed to support field staff
2. Establish interdepartmental team building
  - A. Network with and utilize resources of other City departments
  - B. Develop effective problem solving teams between a specific Fire-Rescue Department division and its City government business partner
3. Market a business plan
  - A. Identify Fire-Rescue Department products and services
  - B. Identify the fiscal impact of providing necessary services
  - C. Demonstrate Fire-Rescue Department revenue offset to general fund draw during annual budget presentations
  - D. Demonstrate Fire-Rescue Department accomplishments and services provided to the community during annual stakeholder familiarization sessions
4. Familiarize City stakeholders of Fire-Rescue operations
  - A. Conduct a mini academy for City and community leaders
  - B. Provide ride along opportunities to City and community leaders
5. Participate in citywide functions
  - A. Participate in City special events and ceremonies
  - B. Participate in charitable events of other City departments
  - C. Continue to provide leadership in the National Management Association
  - D. Participate in City Council meetings
6. Promote interdepartmental feedback
  - A. Develop a customer service form for City departments we do business with
  - B. Provide form to City department personnel after contact



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## Appendix



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Stakeholder Interview Process**

The Strategic Planning Team interviewed San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) stakeholders in order to ascertain their opinions regarding the department's services and image. Stakeholders were classed into two groups: internal stakeholders and external stakeholders. In order to solicit open and honest discussion, identities of the stakeholders who were interviewed were kept anonymous.

Internal stakeholders included uniformed and civilian employees of SDFD. An equal percentage of each group was randomly selected by computer and interviewed by committee members. Participants were asked to identify what SDFD does well and how the department could improve. They were also asked to identify current and future needs and to describe their expectations for the department's future.

External stakeholders included members of the City Administration, the Mayor's Office and the City Council, members of the business community and local community groups. Planning Team members interviewed representatives from each of these groups. Interviewees were queried as to perceptions regarding the current performance of San Diego Fire-Rescue. They were also asked to identify avenues for improvement and direction for the future.

After analyzing the resulting data, the Planning Team identified the themes and issues which emerged from the interviews. These themes and issues were prioritized and ultimately drove the development of the eight strategic initiatives contained within the Strategic Plan.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Internal Stakeholders Themes**

The internal themes resulted from responses to a general survey questionnaire which had been distributed randomly to 300 employees. Representing approximately 25% of the work force, these employees were grouped into three major categories: Fire, Lifeguard and Civilian. After the general survey responses were analyzed, six specific themes emerged: Morale, Service Integration, Apparatus Equipment & Facilities, Training, Emergency Medical Services, and Budget.

#### **Morale**

If an observer were to measure morale within San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, he/she would see a moderate rise shortly after implementation of new programs, new equipment and promotions. Within the last year, the sharing of honest information from management has contributed to good morale. In contrast, however, low morale has resulted from management's failure to allow personnel who are responsible for supervision and operations to express positive input toward improving ongoing programs and making changes in equipment and apparatus. Additionally, the existing promotional process and lack of a significant rewards and recognition program will continue to contribute to lower morale. Mentorship in professionalism and leadership for management and rank and file would greatly enhance the current state of morale.

#### **Services Integration**

The concept of a "seamless" organization within San Diego Fire-Rescue Department does not exist. Communication within the workforce (Firefighters, Lifeguards, Rural Metro, and non-uniformed personnel) is hampered by systemic work-related cultural bias; i.e. "My job assignment is much more important than yours," "This task is only designed for my division," "It's not important for you to know about this information yet," and "Your assistance is not required." Additionally, the lack of integrated equipment systems, e.g., computers, radio channels and e-mail, has exacerbated the problem. An increased cohesiveness and interaction does exist among all divisions during emergencies. The annual workforce meeting has proven to be a very positive step towards improving services integration. However, open communication centered on exchanging information pertaining to roles and responsibilities within each division would greatly enhance the seamless organization concept.



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## **Internal Stakeholder Themes (cont'd)**

### **Apparatus, Equipment & Facilities**

Recent additions to the fleet, equipment acquisitions and proposed facility improvements have been received with positive results. An aggressive approach toward solving problems in those areas must continue. Although the department has made great strides in improving office space and equipment, some divisions have already run out of office space due to growth. It is imperative that San Diego Fire-Rescue plan for its future needs.

### **Training**

The quality of training for uniformed personnel has gradually improved. However, the need for standardized, formal and technical training for all employees within the organization remains an issue. Lifeguard and Fire personnel have expressed a strong desire to conduct more unified training and possibly cross training in core services. Standardized computer training, in-house management and leadership training, as well as career mentorship programs would greatly enhance efficiency and overall service.

### **Emergency Medical Services**

The overall accomplishments achieved by the implementation of the Emergency Medical Services Program are viewed in a very positive manner. However, the emphasis placed upon contract compliance has introduced a concern that this requirement will result in “overworked and burned out employees.” Constant mandatory callbacks, limited field experience, and lack of career paths create an atmosphere of “quicker service delivery by employees who aren’t happy to be there.” The attempt to reduce administrative tasks by introducing new technology is a very positive step toward improvement. Management must continue to take an assertive stance in making realistic improvements to solve burgeoning work related issues.

### **Budget**

San Diego Fire-Rescue employees have “done more with less” over the last several years, producing a very efficient system for providing services. On the surface, this could be considered in a positive light. In reality, however, this philosophy has resulted in failure to take advantage of new technology or innovative opportunities in apparatus and equipment acquisition, as high-end start up costs combine with preconceived bias (“Nice idea but we will never get the funding”). The steady pursuit of adequate funding and the accurate representation of the department’s fiscal requirements are essential to the maintenance of current service levels, implementation of recommended improvements and response to the demands of the future.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **External Stakeholder Themes**

External stakeholder themes were developed by distributing a general survey questionnaire to managers of City departments, business leaders and community group representatives. Members of the strategic planning team conducted follow up interviews in person, by telephone and e-mail. The questionnaire responses were analyzed by the stakeholder team leader and respective sub-group team leaders. The specific themes identified from the data include: City interdepartmental relations, budget issues, the Fire-Rescue department entitlement culture, community relations, technology and developing a business plan.

#### **Interdepartmental Relations**

City government across the board praised the Fire-Rescue department's rapid response, command and control, focus and professionalism during emergency response. The department public image and trust are acclaimed by all City departments. However, data collected indicated a perceived "cultural arrogance" by the Fire-Rescue department when interacting with other City departments during routine business. SDFD comes across as conceited, resistant to change and not valuing other City departments' input.

While engaged in its mission to ensure public safety, San Diego Fire-Rescue needs to acknowledge its role in the overall plan of the City. Fire-Rescue department administrative personnel need to interact and network with professionals from other City departments on a regular basis.

#### **Budget**

City government recognizes the Fire-Rescue department's ability to do more with less. The lack of adequate Fire-Rescue administrative support was validated by the data collected. However, leaders from City administration feel the Fire-Rescue department could improve in managing its budget. Instead of relying on tradition and a loyalty to outdated standards they want us to accept expert advice on developing efficient and cost effective business practices. Examples include; involving the purchasing department during the planning phase of major purchases, identifying and justifying needs, regulating personnel leave usage to reduce the impact on staff overtime costs and utilizing electronic means for purchasing.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **External Stakeholders Themes (cont'd)**

#### **Worker's Compensation**

City government is concerned that the Fire-Rescue Department's "entitlement culture" abuses the Worker's Compensation system. The data identifies a perception that minor injuries incurred during non-emergency operations including station activities, unsanctioned physical fitness activities, training, and non-job related activities are tolerated and encouraged to be entered into the Worker's Compensation system. The Fire-Rescue department's Worker's Compensation costs are excessively high compared to those of other City departments. Employees are encouraged to schedule therapy on duty, adversely affecting staffing. Employees on industrial leave must be backfilled at premium pay causing excessive staffing costs. City government demands that supervisors hold employees accountable for safety and for filing claims honestly.

#### **Community Relations**

Data collected showed unanimous support of the Fire-Rescue department by community and business groups. Community and business groups desire active participation and interaction from informed department representatives concerning disaster and terrorism preparedness, community planning and brush and weed management. Community groups are concerned as to whether the Fire-Rescue department has enough staffing, updated response equipment and paramedic units, equipment and stations to meet its mission effectively, now and in the future.

#### **Technology**

All external stakeholders agree the Fire-Rescue department must improve its information technology systems. Department employees must become proficient in computer operation and software applications in order to effectively control information systems. Computers and software must be upgraded on an ongoing basis and adequate support staff must be available to hardware and software systems. Electronic purchasing, inventory control and rapid, effective communication with all external stakeholder groups are benefits of an effective information technology program.





## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Research Findings**

The research performed by the Strategic Planning Research Team revealed several areas of concern that will have a primary impact on the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department over the next five (5) years. The areas are Demographics, Homeland Security, Standards and Accreditation, Technology, Legislation and Fiscal Constraints.

#### **Demographics**

How will our city and the citizens we serve change in the next five years? SDFD will need to prepare for the changes in demographics currently taking place throughout the City. Following the “City of Villages” concept, many areas are being redeveloped with multi-residential units such as high-rise buildings. There is significant commercial redevelopment which will result in an increased transient working population in the center core areas. The expansion of the San Diego Convention Center, completion of Petco Ballpark and new hotels are expected to produce a rise in the population of visitors and tourists in the downtown area. This infield redevelopment and increased transient population will create a significant increase in population density.

Historically, the location of fire stations has been based on specified response time criteria. To assure an available effective fire and medical force, additional response criteria will need to be created to place additional stations, and/or additional units per station, based on the population density of a particular area of the City.

#### **Homeland Security**

In the days following September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, all public agencies had reason to pause and evaluate their response capabilities and security measures. Since that time, San Diego Fire-Rescue has been called upon to ensure its City’s preparedness in case of a terrorist attack. San Diego as a target is extremely vulnerable, because of its military presence, international border, tourist destinations, bio-tech industries, port, and international airport. Terrorist attack can come in a variety of forms including chemical, biological, nuclear and conventional. Any of these attacks could cost a high price in lives and dollars.

The department’s goals must be two-fold. First, SDFD must work toward preventing terrorist attacks from occurring. Secondly, the department must be ready to save lives, minimize damage and help establish order following attacks that do occur. These goals appear simple; however, achieving them will require a coordinated and focused effort



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Research Findings (cont'd)**

from everyone. There must be a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional approach to solving these problems. New equipment, increased training, and new sources of funding will be necessary to ensure the long term success of this effort.

### **Standards/Accreditation**

The research team reviewed many nationally available standards for SDFD to utilize in the Strategic Planning and/or Accreditation process. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has developed many NFPA Codes and Standards. NFPA develops, publishes, and disseminates more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. Almost every building, process, service, design and installation in society today is affected by NFPA standards. Performance-based codes and standards state their safety goals and reference approved methods that can be used to demonstrate compliance to the standards.

SDFD does not use nationally accepted standards to quantify the criteria used to determine staffing and resource needs. Compared with other metropolitan cities, our apparatus preparedness needs improvement and the City would greatly benefit from permanently funding an aviation program to utilize in emergency responses.

Accreditation is a long process, and SDFD has embarked on this path to achieve it. Senior Staff has allocated staff and resources to the development of an Accreditation Plan, and there are ongoing discussions as to what standards will be adopted at our agency, including an evaluation of NFPA 1710.

### **Technology**

Technology is a broad and fast changing environment. Keeping up with it is difficult, and more often than not, the funds required to pursue technological innovations are just not available. Research covering other metropolitan fire departments revealed the same dilemma that San Diego Fire-Rescue has experienced regarding technology. Many agencies are struggling to remain in front of technological advances, rather than trying to catch up with them.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Research Findings (cont'd)**

Technology does not just come in the form of information systems. Innovations and tools in the fire fighting and life saving technologies exist that will improve emergency and non-emergency activities. Furthermore, the recent war in the Mid East unveiled tools and technology that would be very effective in fire fighting and other life saving activities.

Through research, it was found that departments which make efficient use of whatever funds they have for technology, have embarked in the creation of a Technology Strategic Plan. Such a plan aligns with the business needs, mission and vision of the department allowing the latter to plan, integrate and budget for technology in an efficient manner (new technologies, upgrades and replacements).

### **Legislation**

Some metropolitan fire departments include management staff that follow legislation and proactively impart suggestions or recommendations to law makers. However, staff dedicated to looking out for the interests of the fire department in legislation development are rarely found. On the other hand most law enforcement agencies dedicate one position to lobbying law makers, keeping their management apprised of proposed legislation that will affect law enforcement. These personnel sometimes lobby at the local, state and federal levels.

Fire, medical and lifeguards are also impacted by legislation. In order to evaluate the impacts that governmental mandates may have on fire, medical and lifeguard services, legislation needs to be monitored at the local, state and federal levels. Some examples of issues to watch out for include the environmental factors that will impact some of our services (i.e. water pollution exposures, law enforcement and investigations), and legislation affecting MediCare in California.

### **Fiscal Constraints**

The nation, the state of California and our local government are affected by fiscal constraints. Fiscal year 2003 and the next two to three years will be trying budgetary times for many public safety agencies. As we find ourselves tightening our operating budget belts, we do find opportunities for federal grant funds in the areas of homeland security, terrorism and disaster preparedness. However, while many departments have solicited and been given these grants, they find that staffing and ongoing program costs are left to the agencies to fund.



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Research Findings (cont'd)**

Public safety agencies are compelled to divert funds from one area to cover another. They are being creative in their budgets. Given the lack of local government funds, several agencies are pursuing private/public partnerships to assist in projects and programs.

Along with most fire agencies which would like to be on the cutting edge of fire fighting, live saving and equipment technologies, San Diego Fire-Rescue is not sufficiently funded. It is difficult to meet the standards for public safety in these circumstances. SDFD should seek creative funding to assist in areas of great need (i.e. grants, additional partnerships).



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Critical Support Division Responsibilities**

San Diego Fire-Rescue's products and services affect more than its external customers. A substantial part of the organization supports the department's overall public safety mission through combined internal efforts. As an acknowledgement of these many internal efforts, the following list identifies additional responsibilities which are critical to the success of the department.

#### **Fiscal**

- Budget preparation and monitoring
- Statistical reporting and analysis
- Accounts payable/purchasing
- Travel processing
- Tuition reimbursement

#### **Communications**

- Process calls for fire and emergency medical services
- Manage incidents with field units
- Manage radio equipment, pagers, cell phones, Mobile Data Computers, all
- Department PC's, fax machines, landlines and network access connections
- Administrative/internal department communications
- Data entry/CAD and Fire/RMS
- Staff education on dispatch
- Reports analysis and development
- Network infrastructure maintenance and planning
- Database administration
- System status management
- Response Planning and GIS maintenance

#### **Fleet/Facilities**

- Manage, maintain all fire apparatus and support vehicles
- Repair and overhaul all fire apparatus and support vehicles
- Provide emergency repair service on an 24/7 basis
- Prepare specifications for all new vehicles
- Monitor purchase of all new vehicles
- Outfit and equip all fire apparatus and support vehicles
- Dispose of all salvageable and excess equipment and vehicles
- Obtain vehicle parts and supplies and operate Storeroom 43
- Obtain station supplies, emergency equipment, and operate Storeroom 42
- Manage repair of facilities



# San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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## **Critical Support Division Responsibilities (cont'd)**

- Facilitate fire station design, land acquisition, and construction
- Facilitate preparation of temporary fire stations
- Manage fire station fuel tanks
- Manage furniture, appliances, and equipment for fire stations

## **Training and Education**

- Staff Development/Career Development
- Public Information
- Continuing Education
- Recruitment
- In-service training
- Seminars, conferences
- Medical continuing education program
- Medical EMT program
- Fire Academy Training
- Apparatus Driver Training
- Safety Program
- Probationary Firefighter Program
- Joint Apprenticeship (JAC) Program management
- Mentor Program
- Community Outreach Recruitment and Community Education
- Firefighter Class Exams

## **Fire Prevention**

- Inspections and Permit Services for:
  - High Rise Buildings
  - Special Events
  - HazMat Technical Services - Tanks
  - Combustible, Explosive, & Dangerous Materials
  - Fire Company Inspection Program
  - Brush and Weed Management
  - Convention Center
- Code Adoption and Development
- Budget Preparation
- Billings and Fee Collection
- Revenue Tracking
- Fire Hazard Complaints
- Fire Incident Reports



## San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Strategic Plan

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### **Critical Support Division Responsibilities (cont'd)**

- Sprinkler Certifications
- Fire Lane Analysis
- Sub-Division Reviews
- Special Surveys
- Knox Boxes
- Route Slips/AIMS Reports
- Inspection Data Entry
- Inspection Records Management
- Records Searches and Inquiries
- Internal Training
- Public Education
- Data Services

### **Human Resources**

- Employee selection, promotion, discipline, and termination
- Employee Health Programs and Testing
- EEO & Fact Finding Coordination
- Employee Uniforms
- Infectious Control Officer
- Claims and litigation
- Workers' Compensation
- Employee Performance Evaluation Program
- Rewards and Recognition Programs
- Payroll